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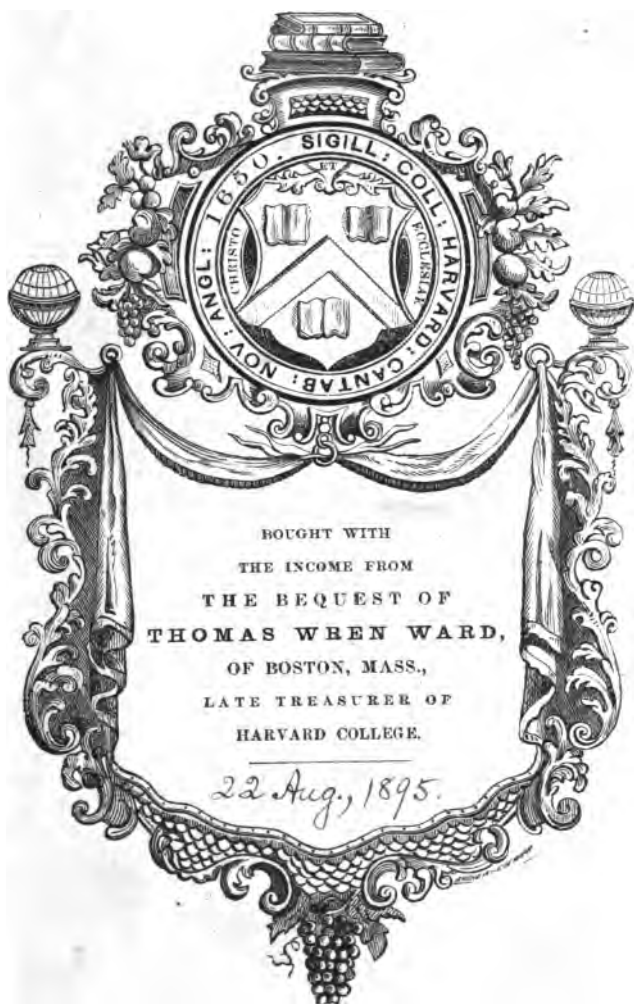
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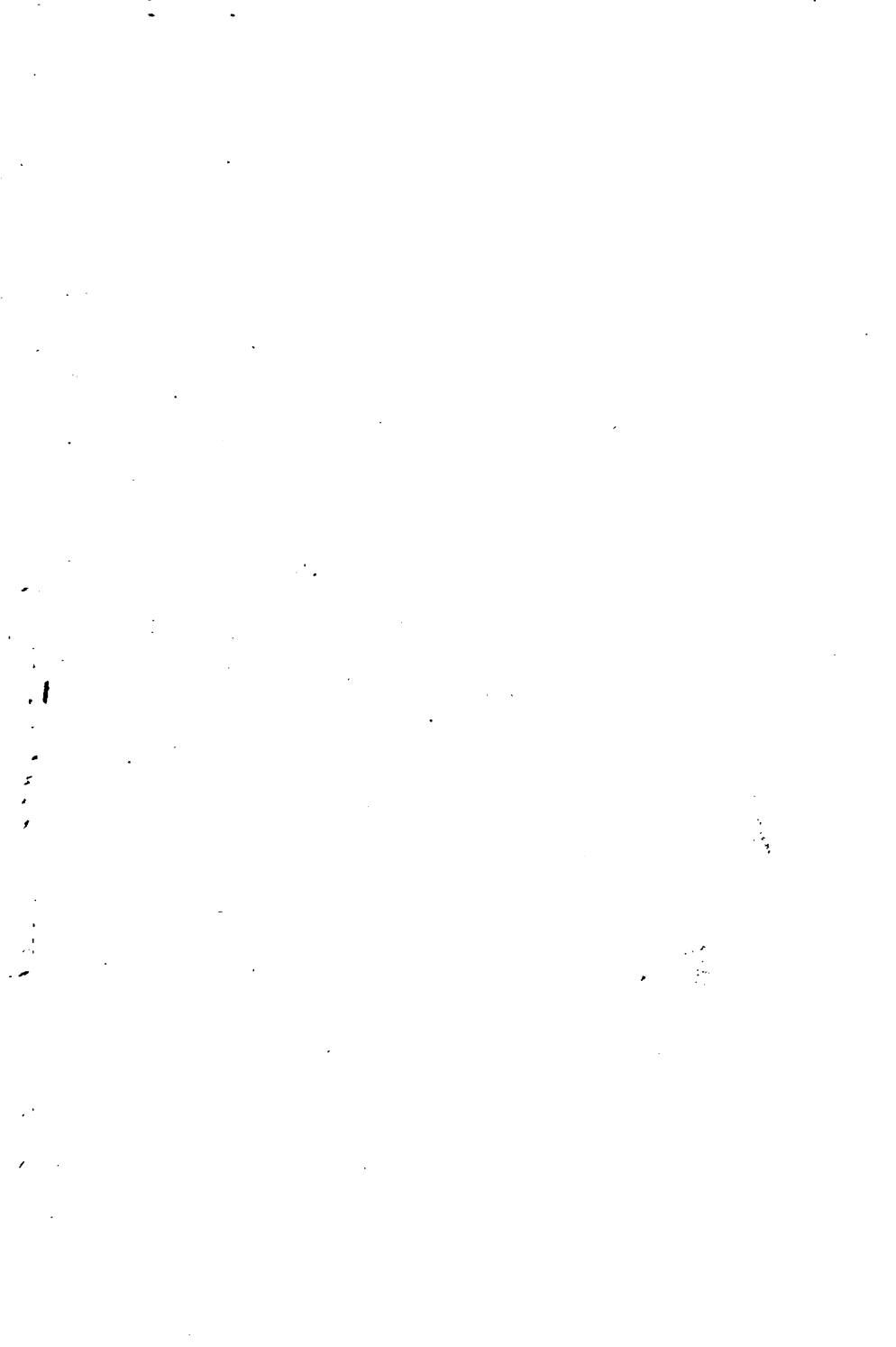
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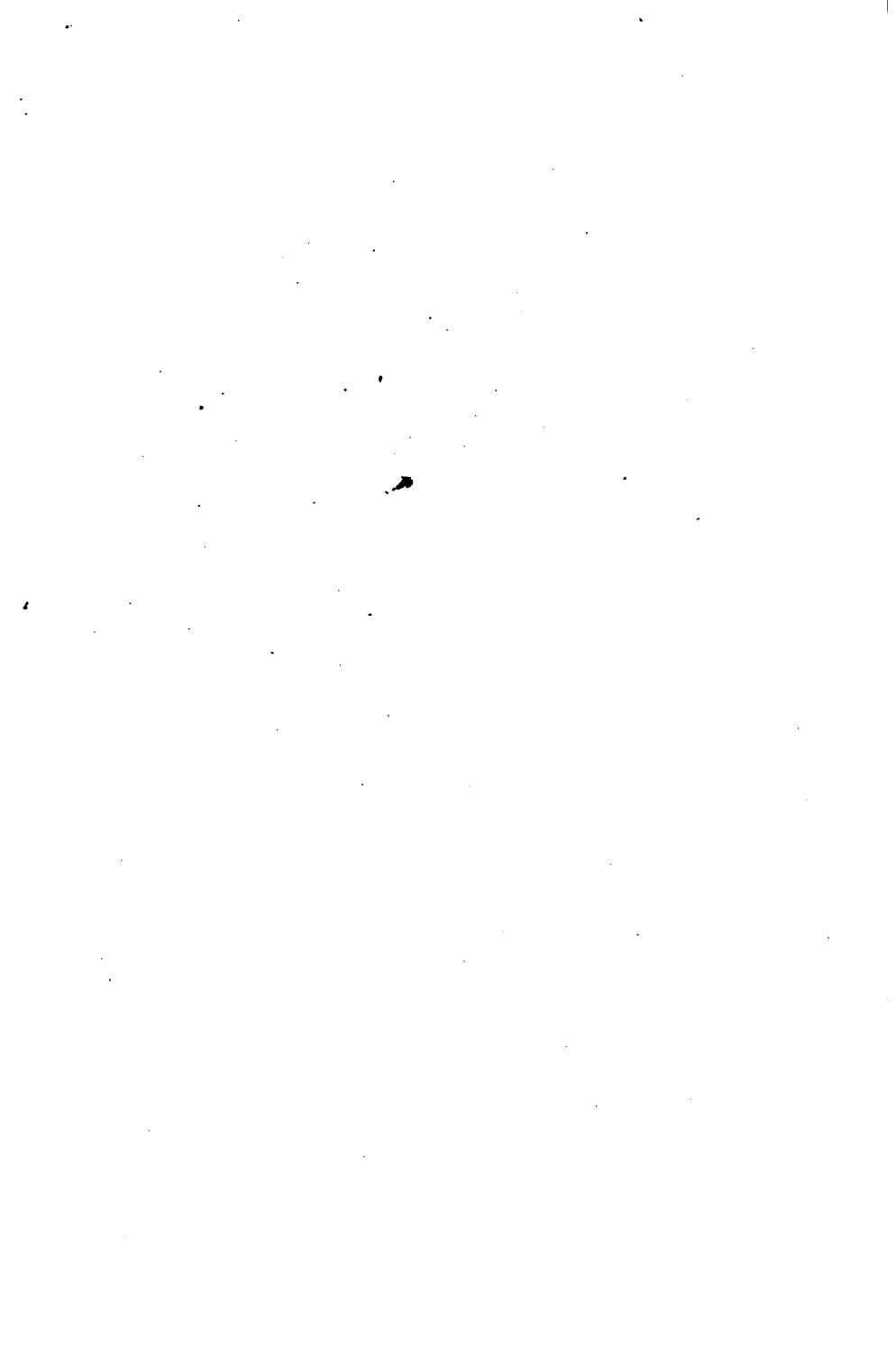
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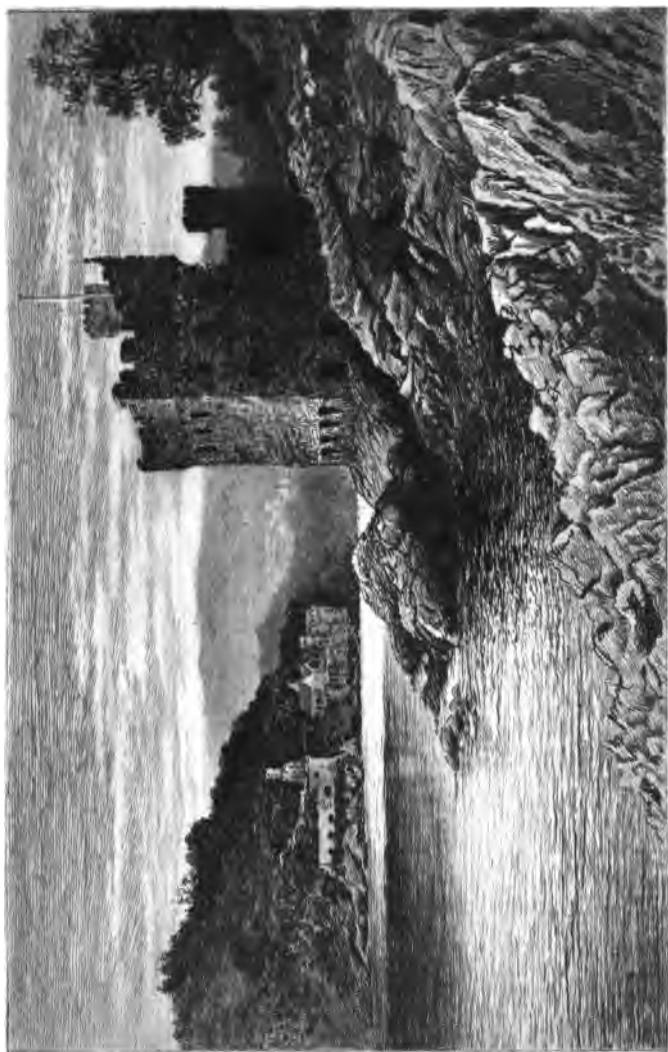






THE RIVERS OF DEVON





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THE
RIVERS OF DEVON

FROM SOURCE TO SEA

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF
THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES ON THEIR BANKS

BY

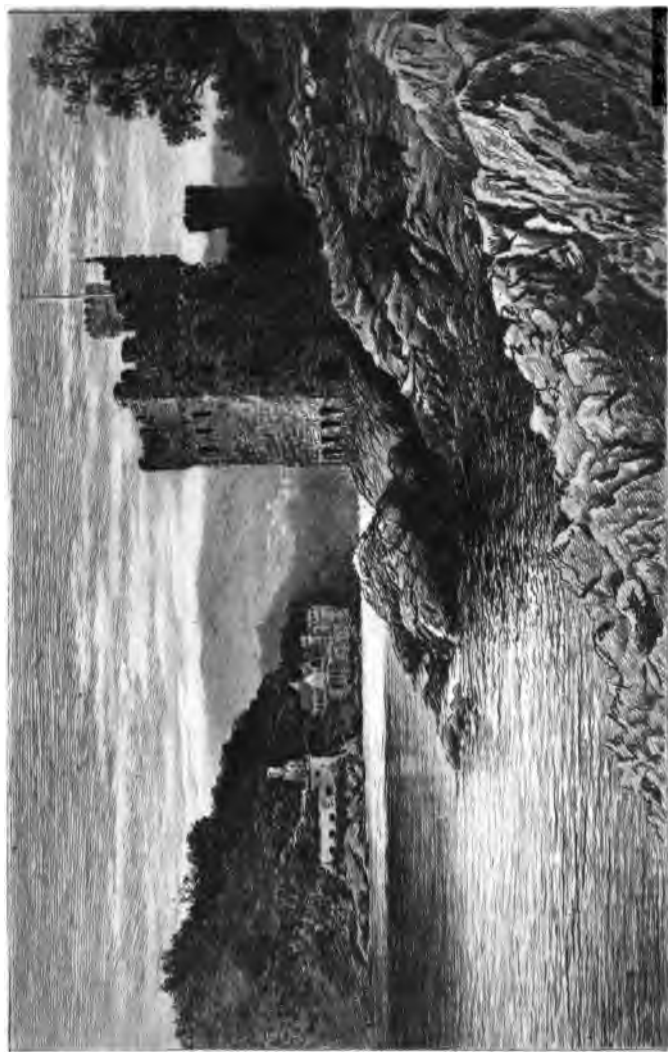
JOHN LLOYD WARDEN PAGE

AUTHOR OF

'AN EXPLORATION OF DARTMOOR AND ITS ANTIQUITIES,' 'AN EXPLORATION OF
EXMOUTH AND THE HILL COUNTRY OF WEST SOMERSET,'
'DORSET HAMPTON: ITS CASTLE,' ETC.

'Thy rivers to their inconstant source explore'
COLLIER

LONDON
SEELEY AND CO., LIMITED
ESSEX STREET, STRAND
1893



Admiral's Bay

Dartmouth.

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WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF
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'OXFORDHAMTON, ITS CASTLE,' ETC.

'Thy rivers to their mountain sources explore'
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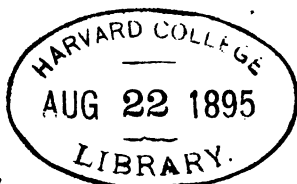
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COTTLE

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P R E F A C E.

A WRITER in the *Magazine of Art* for 1885, after remarking that the rivers of England have long been celebrated by the Muses—by Spenser, by Drayton, and others—says that ‘the Devonian sisterhood of streams has been to a certain extent neglected.’ They have not, he says, shared ‘the good fortune of Wordsworth’s Duddon and Wye, of Severn and Avon, of Trent and Ouse, or of Thames and Isis, with their long and illustrious roll of singers from Spenser to Peacock.’ He is in the main right. Not that the rivers of Devon have *no* poets to sing their praises. Are there not Browne, Carrington, Capern, Bradford, Collins, and a dozen more, each of whom has felt inspired to pour forth his lay? But our Devon poets wear not the laurel; out of the Western counties they are, comparatively, unknown.

Nor can I find that writers in more humble prose have much concerned themselves with these Devonshire rivers. I have searched the finest library in the county for some book on these beautiful streams, and searched in vain. I do not mean to say that there are not certain works treating of a part, even of the whole, of some more noted river—witness Pulman’s great ‘Book of the Axe’—but I

can discover no writer that has yet thought it worth his while to tell what may be seen and heard in a pilgrimage of *all* these rivers from source to sea, or *vice-versâ*. Therefore have I, in all humility, undertaken the task.

It has been a pleasant task. My wanderings have led me through scenery of every description ; through scenery of moorland, of woodland, of pasture, of wave-washed rock ; through scenery that only Devon can show. Some of the districts penetrated are—and more is the pity—almost ‘unknown, untrod.’ Others are better known ; but even the surroundings of places so accessible as Bideford, Torrington, Axmouth, and Ottery are not explored as they ought to be ; while the pleasant country between Salcombe and the Yealm is—I presume because there is no railway—to the average tourist *terra incognita*. To these spots, ‘remote, unfriended,’ I would introduce my readers.

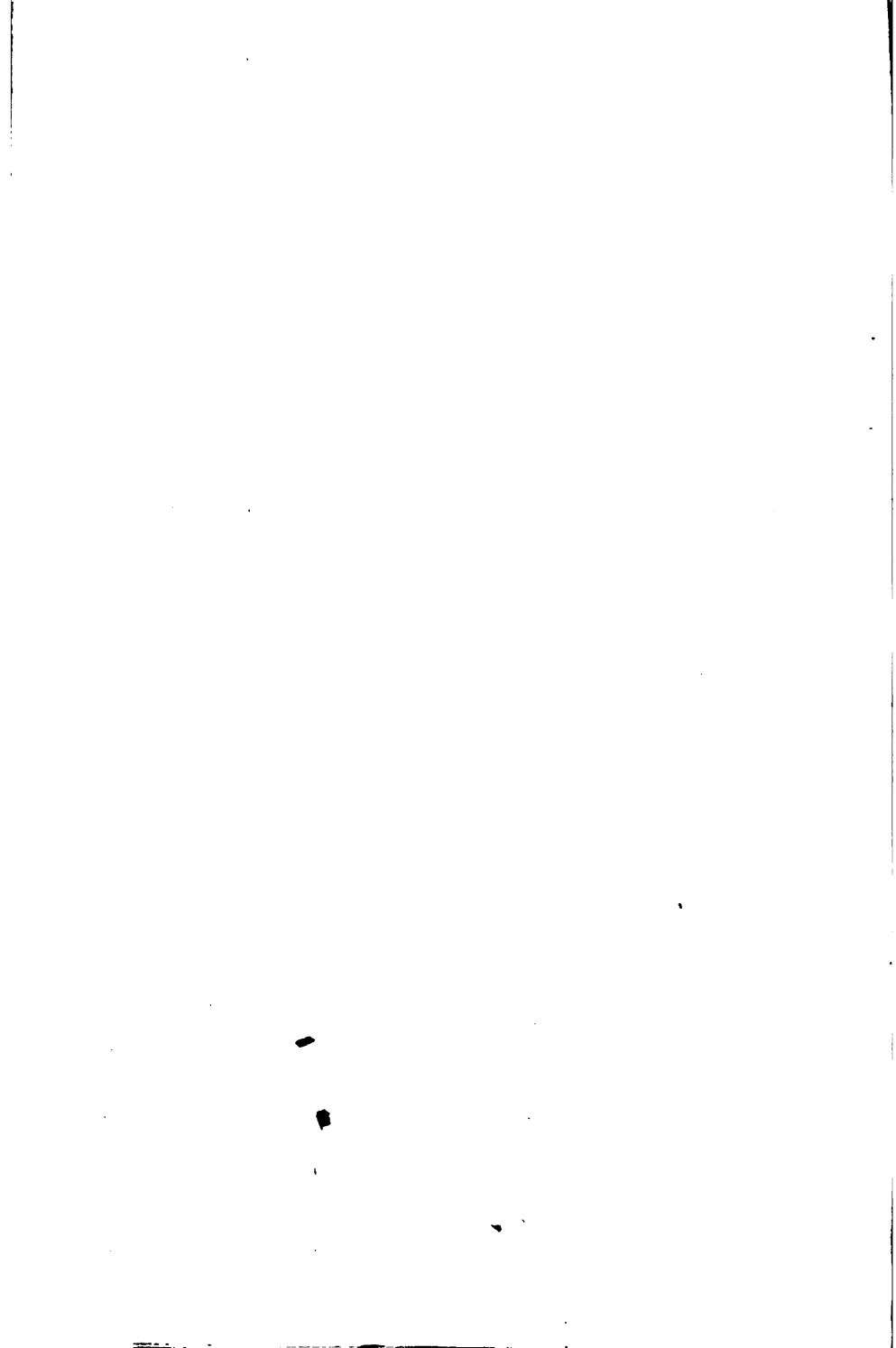
So many of the Devonshire rivers rise upon Dartmoor that it has been impossible to avoid going over some of the ground traversed in my ‘Exploration’ of that wild and interesting region. There has been, too, some reference—but not, I think, much—to places already described in my ‘Exmoor.’ To those who have read these works I offer my apologies—if what is inevitable needs an apology ; to those who have not I have done no wrong.

I should like to have said more about the fishing. But the book had already outswelled the dimensions originally intended, and I had to abstain. Besides, every angler knows how famous the Devon—especially the *South Devon*—streams are for trout and salmon peel ; and if

he wants details, he can get them in much fuller measure than I could impart from the local guide-books, among which the 'Guide to Sea-fishing and the Rivers of South Devon,' and the 'Fisherman's Map,' published by Messrs. Hearder and Sons, Union Street, Plymouth, are pre-eminent. As to the North Devon streams, the angler will find every information about the Taw at Barnstaple—and, indeed, at most of the inns along its banks—about the Torridge at Bideford and Torrington, while the fisheries of the Lyn and neighbouring waters are clearly set forth in Mr. C. S. Ward's 'Guide to North Devon and North Cornwall.' It may be well to mention at once that there is no free-fishing, except on Dartmoor.

In conclusion, let me offer one caution: trust not the Devonshire mile. Multiply every distance given (especially in out-of-the-way districts) by two, occasionally by three. 'As long as a Devonshire mile' is a common saying in the West Country, and the rustic would make it longer still. Sometimes, however, he will double the distance. Here is an illustration of both methods. On one occasion, when about five miles from Torquay, I was told that the distance was *three*, although a minute before it had been given at *ten*. In short, the country people have no idea of distance, and almost always under-estimate it.

JOHN LL. WARDEN PAGE.



THE RIVERS OF DEVON

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY.

Characteristics of the Rivers—Exmoor Rivers—Dartmoor—Its Rivers—Bogs—
Antiquities—The Blackdown Rivers—The Axe—The Tamar and Torridge
—Summary—Commercial Importance.

‘But Albion,
Nor streams so fresh, so fair, nor fields so gay,
May boast as thine, Devon.’

CARRINGTON.

IF you look at a map of Devonshire you will see that a very considerable portion is occupied by hill and moorland. In the north, dividing it from Somerset, are the buttresses of Exmoor; in the south, extending indeed far into the centre and west, is the wild granite waste of Dartmoor; on the eastern border rises the range of Blackdown. In one or the other of these hill districts nearly every river has its birth; in one or the other they have their cradles, generally very rough cradles, too. Nay, more, their youth is spent on these uplands. And a wild dashing youth it is, impatient of control, eager to leave the wild moor for the ferny combes and fat pastures that everywhere in this garden of England lie between the hills and the sea.

In fact, till they meet with the all-conquering ocean, few Devonshire rivers ever *do* learn to behave themselves

with propriety. 'A short life but a merry one' might well be the motto of nearly all. Here are no placid streams meandering for a dozen miles or more through level meads, bordered by nodding sedge or lush water-plant—rivers that bear barges on their bosoms, or reflect the shadows of hanging wood. A staid respectable Midland stream would have nothing to do with the headlong torrents of Devon that, except when they broaden into estuaries, have not *depth* enough to be useful, and seldom pause to *reflect* at all.

Yet it is not their fault, after all : they are the victims of circumstance. *Facilis descensus Averni*. Dame Nature is to blame. Why did she create such a steep pathway over which her children may rush to their doom in the glittering sea ? But *we* blame her not. What though her conduct in a bygone time gave her offspring so desolate a home that they have, ever since their birth, attempted to escape from its uncongenial ways, its harsh manners,

' Its rocky bottoms that do tear its streams
And make them frantic, even to all extremes ' ?

—forgive me, shade of Herrick, for the slightest of adaptations. The mighty throes of the great mother that caused the upheaval of Dartmoor, and in a lesser degree of Exmoor, too, have given us one of the loveliest of English counties, and certainly the loveliest of English streams.

For this is why our Devon rivers have such brief existence, this is why many measure but twoscore miles from source to sea, and as many more are of length even less. Not only is the county bounded north and south by the ' salt water,' as I once heard a Welsh farmer picturesquely term the sea, but no less than half of them rise in the very centre, fifteen to eighteen hundred feet above the waters of the two channels, and from a neighbouring height you may see the blue expanse right well, and on a clear day the ships too. A descent of a couple of hundred

feet in a single mile is nothing for these mountain-born streams.

Desolate but grand are these western moorlands. With Exmoor, that 'filthy barren ground near the Severn sea,' as Camden profanely describes it, we shall have no very extensive acquaintance, except with its western, and perhaps finest, extremity. Little of it is in Devonshire, though most people imagine that there is a great deal. But here is the Lyn stream, with its beautiful tributaries; here the ravines of Watersmeet and Glen Lyn; here the stately Lyn Cliff, and the great cape of the Foreland thrusting its precipices into the Severn Sea. And here, too, rises the Exe within a mile or so of a Lyn tributary, both trickling out of as sad a piece of bogland as Exmoor can show—both to pass, erelong, through types of scenery which, though widely different, are each beautiful exceedingly.

But Dartmoor we cannot escape if we would. Right in the middle of it rise, as I said just now, more than half of the Devonshire streams, not to speak of a dozen or two fair-sized tributaries. And from north to south Dartmoor is twenty-two miles across. Thus it will be evident to the meanest capacity—as orators say—that he who would trace the most romantic of West Country streams to their sources must face a good many miles of rough travelling. Nor do I think that this venturesome being will regret his labour. I say 'venturesome' advisedly, for one who knows a good deal about it says, and says rightly, 'Dartmoor is not a place to be dealt with delicately.' But if you keep clear of fogs (and bogs) you can come to no harm, and you will see rock and boulder, hill and valley, torrent and tor, multiplied almost unceasingly, and the latter, at all events, changing its appearance strangely at every hundred yards. And you will see tints of blue and purple, and ochre, and I know not how many other colours, changing unceasingly too,

as the cloud shadows move majestically over the waste, a silent but mysterious host. And, if you will, you can get into the clouds themselves, and that not seldom either; for this Dartmoor reaches 2,000 feet above the sea.

It is in this lofty part of Dartmoor that the rivers are born. Imagine a dreary stretch of black peat morass scored with fissures, fissures due to the action of the fierce rains and the runnels which they generate. No definite stream is seen at first, but if you pull up and listen intently you will hear a something that gradually dominates the beating of your own heart till now the only sound breaking the intense stillness. It is the infant cry of a river, of which it is difficult to tell unless you know your exact whereabouts, for this morass is hundreds of acres in extent, and three or four streams rise close together. It may be the voice of Taw or Ockment flowing north towards the Severn Sea, or that of Tavy or Dart hastening towards the English Channel. It might—if you wandered a little to the south-east—even be the Teign, but whatever it be, its voice is the only sound that breaks the solemn silence. In a region scarcely less desolate, away to the south, the Avon, Erme, Yealm and Plym arise and sweep down their stony valleys to fertilize the green pastures of the South Hams.

These bogs are not pleasant, but without them where would the vaunted fertility of Devonshire be? Just suppose for a moment that the rains descended upon rocky ground, what would be the condition of these rivers? For one short hour a roaring cataract, the next dry or nearly so, in summer heat a chain of little stagnant pools. All this the bogs prevent; they act as huge sponges, as reservoirs for the rain, the dew, the mist; and however dry the season, however fierce the sun, the river quails not, for it knows that its storage house is inexhaustible.

But apart from its fertilizing properties, apart from its healthfulness—for does not Mr. Walter Besant say that with Malvern Hill it has ‘the finest air that blows over God’s earth’—Dartmoor is a district of the greatest possible interest to the antiquary, especially to him who makes the rude-stone remains of prehistoric days his study. For it is strewn with the ruins of an earlier world. Here upstarting in gaunt loneliness from the heather is the menhir or rock pillar; there stretching along the smoother plateau, or up over the bleak hillside, are ‘stone avenue’ and ‘stone row,’ both generally found in connection with the cairn and barrow, the last resting-place of primeval man. Objects still more striking are the ‘sacred’ circles formed of detached moorstone blocks reared on end, with little or no attempt at tooling, and generally with even less regard to harmony in their proportions.* And on the slopes near the banks of the streams are collections of stone rings, the basements of the huts inhabited by our forefathers long before the Norman won Senlac, perhaps even long before the legions drove back the poor Briton a thousand years earlier. Such is Dartmoor, for these, if for no other reasons, the most interesting mountain tract in Great Britain.

Of the ‘greensand’ ridge of Blackdown we touch only the outskirts, for the rivers that rise there are but the Culm and the Otter, the former a tributary of the Exe, the latter a small stream that would be seldom visited by the average tourist, so far is it from the beaten track, were it not for the glorious church of St. Mary and the pleasant watering-place of Budleigh Salterton. As for the Axe, another little river of Devon, it is born among the Dorset downs.

Next to Plym comes Tamar, his waters almost mingling

* The finest specimen on the moor, that on Scorhill Down, has twenty-five stones erect, ranging from about eight feet to two feet six inches in height. Fernworthy and Grey Wethers circles, however, are much more symmetrical, but the blocks are lower.

with those of the Dartmoor stream in one of the noblest harbours in the world. The birthplace of Tamar, most important of Devonshire rivers, is in a rushy knoll in the dull moorland country beyond Holsworthy. Close to it rises the Torridge, which, taking the northern slope of the watershed, follows a circuitous course to Appledore. Both rise within four miles of the sea. Yet Tamar has to travel fifty-nine miles before it reaches Plymouth Sound, and the Torridge a distance quite as long to the waters of Bideford Bay. And yet the source of this latter river is, as the crow flies, but some fifteen miles from its mouth!

And now we have them all, and having found where they take their 'small beginnings,' let us, as it were, catalogue them seriatim. Commencing, then, towards the rising sun, first comes Axe, then Otter, then Exe, with its tributary the Culm. Below the Exe the Dartmoor streams descend to the sea, the Teign, the Dart, the Avon, the Erme, the Yealm, the Plym, the Tavy, and its tributary the Walkham. Last of the rivers flowing southward is the Tamar, forming the boundary line between Devon and Cornwall. Of streams taking a northerly course there are three: the Torridge, into which the Ockment falls, discharging itself, as I have just said, into Bideford Bay, where it is met by the Taw from Dartmoor, and last the rushing torrent of the Lyn. Thirteen in all have direct connection with the sea; three at least have fair-sized tributaries without counting smaller streams, which would swell the number very considerably.

Which is the fairest? Ah! that is a question difficult to answer. Paris had no harder task. Popular opinion, I believe, would divide the golden apple into three parts, and give one portion to the Dart, another to the Tamar, a third to the Lyn, and I do not know that it would be far wrong. Still, there are one or two other rivers that

deserve more than passing recognition. Surely the Gorge of Fingle, on the Teign, is the finest ravine in the West of England. Where is a lovelier estuary than that of the Yealm? Where more varied scenery of wood and rock than the Plym can show about Shaugh? Some, I know, think highly of more pastoral Exe, and one gentleman (but he is a poet) exclaims :

‘ First of Devon’s thousand streams,
Silver Axe !’

But for myself, I say give me the short wild moorland stream ; give me the rivers from Exmouth to Hamoaze. From the more gentle Axe, Otter, and Exe, I would take nothing, but they are, to my mind, not to be compared with such streams as the Dart, the Yealm, the Plym, or the Lyn.

With such a variety of scenery as Devon affords, with such a geological formation, these rivers must, of necessity, differ widely, not only as to their surroundings, but even as to their colour. As long as they are on the heights they are all crystal-clear, but when their race has run a few miles down the valley some of them lose their transparency. This may be due, doubtless *is* due, to a great extent, to the towns and villages that have arisen on their banks ; but I doubt whether streams flowing through such alluvial soil as do the Tamar, the Exe, and the Culm, were ever quite as pellucid as those bubbling from the granite and flowing over a more or less stony bed all the way to the head of the estuary. Thus, these three large rivers—that is, large as West Country rivers go—though clear as glass compared with their slow-moving brethren further east—the muddy Parret, and, if possible, muddier Avon, for instance—have not the sparkle or gleam of the moorland torrent, any more than they have their noisy manners. And yet not a single Devon river is really sluggish. The country is against it.

Even the mild Exe is swift, while the Tamar (which, as it is navigable for twenty miles or so, some would consider tardy) is only slow-moving between Weir Head and its estuary. And not one is uninteresting. Where you have not mountain, you have wooded hill; where fernycombe is not, the rich valley is emerald with greenest grass and stately with some of the finest elms in England. In the river scenery of Devonshire monotony has no portion—the commonplace cannot exist.

I have said that the Tamar is the most important stream; and so it is. But this is not so much because there is a waterway for coasters as far as Calstock, but because its lower course, the estuary called Hamoaze, is a station for the navy, while the great dockyards of Devonport and Keyham lie along the waterside. Next to it comes the Dart, navigable (of course, on the flowing tide only) to Totnes, a distance of twelve miles. 'Dartmouth Haven,' as Leland calls the beautiful pool inside the narrow opening, where the river meets the sea, has long been a port of the Cape steamers. It is also a station for the training of naval cadets, and a great rendezvous of the yachting fraternity. The Taw and the Torridge, too, admit vessels to the ports of Bideford and Barnstaple respectively, and ships can get a mile or so up the Exe before they must enter the canal for Exeter. For the estuary of the longest river in Devon has for many a year been as unfit for the manoeuvres of any but the smallest craft, as that of its neighbour the Teign, on which, above Shaldon Bridge, you will see nothing but fishing boats or a clumsy barge blundering up on the tide as far as Newton.

As for the other rivers, the Plym is about as navigable as the Teign, while the Yealm will admit a yacht for about a mile, though at exceptionally high spring tides, I believe, light-draught excursion steamers manage to get as far as Kitley, two miles further, a voyage that is

strongly recommended to anyone who wishes to see one of the prettiest estuaries in the West.

There is only one other river that can be called navigable, and this is a tributary of the Tamar—the Tavy. The Plymouth excursion steamers go up to Lophill, by Sir Massey Lopes's house of Maristowe, and occasionally a mile or so beyond, and it is as pleasant a trip as any from the West Hoe Pier. But none of the others see aught but skiffs from year's end to year's end. There is either a bar, or the estuary has too many sandbanks and shoals to admit larger craft. In these remarks the so-called Salcombe river is not included. For it is not a river at all, but an arm of the sea, the outlet of but one or two insignificant brooks.

Thus it will be seen that the rivers of Devon are not, so far as navigation is concerned, of great commercial value. Yet even the most headlong do not lead useless lives. Many a mill is turned by the torrent, or by 'leats' drawn therefrom; many a factory owes its existence to their presence; they drive the machinery of more than one mine. Whether the future has greater deeds of usefulness in store for them, as my old friend, the Rev. E. Spencer, seems to imagine,* I cannot tell. But I hope that the day is far, very far distant, when, as he says, coal being no longer forthcoming, and iron a thing of the past, Devonshire will, with her unequalled water supply, be in the forefront of English counties. 'The same water power that can turn the mill can be easily converted into light and heat, and that which is elsewhere wanting from the failure of coal and dearth of wood, Devon will still have in lasting abundance, for her streams are everywhere—not sluggish, impure, useless streams, but sparkling, active, full of life and power, and ready to be applied to the thousand uses to which man's ingenuity may train

* *Vide* 'A Few Remarks about Dartmoor.'

them. All that will soon be wanting elsewhere Devonshire will have, and continue to have, in abundance; and while the population of other parts of England is compelled to emigrate, she will be able to feed and clothe all her children, and perhaps become the home of many thousands of others.'

CHAPTER II

THE EXE—TO TIVERTON.

Source of the Exe—Exmoor—Exford—The Devon and Somerset Staghounds—Arthur Heal—Road Castle—Winsford Hill—An Inscribed Stone—Winsford—The Quarne—Exton—The 'Wild West' Coach—Barlynch Abbey—Baronsdown—Pixton—Oakford Bridge—The Exe Valley Railway—Bampton Fair—Tiverton—The Castle—The Story of the Mistletoe Bough—St. Peter's Church—John Greenway and the Treasure—His Almshouses—Peter Blundell.

HIGH up on the great waste of Exmoor, not far from the head of the valley celebrated (more than it deserves) in the romance of 'Lorna Doone,' is a stretch of spongy land called The Chains. Why it has this queer name I know not, unless it be that the hunters of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds are occasionally held there against their will, *chained*, as it were, in the gloomy realm of the Bog King. It is about the most lonely and desolate spot on the moorland, abominable going at any time, but after heavy rain simply impassable. Man and beast give it a wide berth; the blackcock and plover have it all to themselves. Save, then, the cry of an occasional bird, or the strong language of a 'stugged' Nimrod, silence broods over this uncanny spot from year's end to year's end. There is not even the sound of running water until you get down over the eastern slopes towards the road connecting Lynton with Simonsbath, the moor metropolis. Here among the brown coarse grass the silence is at last broken by a faint tinkle—the infant voice of the Exe.

It is a fine tract this Exmoor, and no valley on the spurs of the great mountain wilderness which you can see on the southern horizon—except the Fingle Glen—can beat, or perhaps even touch, the ravines of Lyn and Horner. The wild rolling hills of the interior, too, are imposing, notwithstanding the absence of rock. There is a sense of breadth, of freedom, of the infinite, which cannot but be felt by every thoughtful man who looks eastward from the great tumuli of Chapman Barrows, or westward from the bald brow of Dunkery.

In such a land the Exe is born. For three or four miles the valley, down which it flows a clear and rapid rivulet, is bare as bare can be; but, look! before it reaches Exford, cultivation has claimed the slopes. Great open pastures, swept by every wind that blows, and boasting for the most part very indifferent herbage, are succeeded by greener fields, by coppice, even by occasional timber. And so by the time that the whitewashed cottages of its first village come into view, the river has said farewell to the moor for ever.

Exford is the headquarters of the famous Devon and Somerset Staghounds, and the abode of that ancient huntsman, Arthur Heal. Arthur has given up the chase these four years, and spends his retirement in working a little farm well up the hill towards Simonsbath, and not so very far from his beloved kennels. If you want to know all about the chase of the red-deer (remember, he is the only *wild*-deer left in England), Arthur is the man. He is deeply versed in Exmoor venery, from harbouring and tufting to the mysteries of 'Brow, Bey, and Trey.' At his house may be seen fine specimens of antlers, not to speak of other matters connected with the chase—to wit, the slot of one of his latest deer, nobly mounted in silver, and the knife wherewith the Prince of Wales administered the *coup de grâce* to an Exmoor monarch in 1884. He will tell you how at that meet there were

fifteen hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand on foot, and how good old Jack Russell—peace be to his ashes!—rode through the press, shouting imploringly, ‘Please make way, gentlemen, for his Royal Highness!’ The Prince’s autograph photograph, of which Arthur is, of course, very proud, occupies the position of honour on the parlour-table, well supported by those of other titled followers of the red-deer, while etchings and drawings illustrative of stag-hunting given him by fellow-sportsmen adorn the walls.

And you will hear of all sorts of notable runs; of the great Bratton day, when the stag ran from Knightacott Wood, through Twitchen Wood, over Chapman Barrows, and right away to Luccombe, where he was killed; and the scarcely less famous day when the stag of Huscombe Wood, Haddon, was killed at Clammer by *candle-light*!

As for Exford itself, it is a healthy, well-to-do village, and that is about all that can be said for it. Its annals are ‘mute,’ if not ‘inglorious.’ Contrary to most villages, it is, though

‘Far in a wild unknown to public view,

lively enough in autumn, when the street is thronged with Nimrods, male and female, from the outer world, come to try their hand at stag-hunting. This influx has actually led to the erection of a coffee-tavern, the inns being unable to entertain the numbers that assemble on the eve of an important meet. Exford Church, a building well mellowed by the hand of Time, stands boldly on the hilltop above the village.

Down a pleasant valley the river flows onward. The land is quite cultivated now, but the moor still presses it hard. By whichever of the highroads (‘high’ in more senses than one) you follow its course, there are glimpses of brown heath close at hand, of shadowy far-off combe, of high-placed tumuli outlined against the sky; while on

the left uprears Dunkery Beacon, the highest hill in Somerset.

For the Exe rises in Somerset; and, judging by his cheery tone as he prattles towards Winsford, he is well satisfied with his quarters, and in no hurry to become a river of Devon. It is not a populous place, this green vale between Exford and Winsford. Here a cottage or two, there a white-walled farm, roofed with thatch or gray tiles, blinks in the sunshine. Near one of them—it is called Lyncombe—on a hill round which the river makes one of its numerous bends, is Road Castle, an earthwork which may or may not be Roman. From Exford Church, which looks right down upon it, it certainly appears rather oblong than circular; but nearer I have not been, nor if I had should I venture to pronounce an opinion. But at Winsford you approach a much more interesting antiquity; for on Winsford Hill there is a Romano-British inscribed stone, which Professor Rhys tells me he regards as one of the most important monuments in South-Western Britain.*

By all means get up on to this Winsford Hill—you must, indeed, skirt it if you follow the road above the right bank of the river; and if you come by Exford Church, and along by the side of Larcombe Brook, it is but a couple of miles to the top. Here from the tumuli on the summit there is a fine view, not only over Exmoor, but across long miles of cultivated country to Dartmoor, rugged against the southern sky. The hill is mantled thick with heather, and reaches some fourteen hundred feet above the sea, a glimpse of which can, if I remember aright, be caught over the shoulder of Dunkery, which

* The stone is inscribed :

CARATACI
[N]EPVS,

barbaric Latin for NEPOS=*A kinsman of Caratacus, i.e. Caractacus.* The N has, however, been broken off, but is preserved.

does not from this point look at all the mountain it undoubtedly is.

As for Winsford village, it is one of the prettiest in West Somerset, and that is saying a great deal, as any man who has seen Crowcombe, Dunster, and Porlock will admit. I think the name, though very different to look at, has the same meaning as Exford. 'Win' is synonymous with *ean*, water, and 'Exe' is *Esc* or *Isc*, having a like signification. So Exford and Winsford are simply the 'water-ford.' Notwithstanding this, the latter village has about as many bridges as London. There are two or three over Exe itself, and as many more over a tiny tributary which any man may take almost at a stride. Above them all on the hillside stands the church, a large Perpendicular building lately restored. At the foot of the slope and down the valley the river pours a merry flood, clear as glass, and often overhung with foliage either of bush or tree. For now of the moor there is nothing left, and henceforward nearly all the way to Topsham the valley of the Exe is well timbered.

There is an old-world inn, too, at Winsford, the Royal Oak, a very picturesque object with its projecting casements and octagonal leaded panes. The cottages, with their warm-coloured thatch and clustering roses, are picturesque, too. I should say *were*, for some ruthless plasterer has lately torn down the flowers, and the cottages have descended to the level of the commonplace. But let us hope not for long. In these warm, humid Western valleys vegetation grows apace, and a rose-bush will be half over a house in no time.

Let us now follow the riverside road leading into the highway from Dunster to Dulverton—a charming road (or rather *lane*) bordered nearly all the way by hanging woods. Just before it joins the highway it passes over two little bridges, the first spanning the Exe, the second its tributary the Quarme, a stream rising in swampy

ground on Dunkery. I fancy the name of Quarme is best known in connection with a fine pack of harriers kept by one of the most popular of West Country yeomen at his home on the slope of the Brendon Hills, at no great distance from, though at some considerable elevation above, the stream from which the farm takes its name.

And now Exe turns suddenly southwards, setting his face, as it were, for the sea. And still cleaving to the waterside, the road runs southward too, winding even as the river winds between the wooded hills or round the barer promontories here and there dotted with furze and blackberry bushes, above which rise masses of foliage.

It is not far down this road to Bridgetown, a hamlet in Exton parish. As we approach it we get a glimpse of Exton Church peeping over the hillside to the left. It is reached by a terribly steep lane of the roof of a house species. The humble little building—Perpendicular as usual—has nothing very striking about it, and, like too many others in these regions, is defaced with stucco; not, however, entirely without reason, for the situation is an exposed one, and the composition not only keeps out the rain, but must add considerably to the *warmth* of the building when ‘in the winter season the great blustering winds rowling upon the high craggy hills and open wastes and moores do make the ayre very cold and sharpe.’ The view from the churchyard is fine. Almost due north runs the valley of the Quarme, closed at the head by the long purple swell of Dunkery. To the left may be traced the windings of the valley from Winsford, the heathery upland of Winsford Hill rising over the green pastures of the lower slopes.

A horn sounds below. Up the road from Dulverton comes with fine, cheery rattle the ‘Wild West’ coach *en route* for Dunster and Minehead. Keep your eye on that opening there where a bit of the road can be seen, and you will catch sight of the driver—Tom Baker—and

box-seat passengers, perhaps even of the gaily-painted vehicle itself swinging up the valley as fast as four good horses can travel. There they go—a goodly company! Their faces cannot be seen, but if they are not exhilarated by this bracing moorland air—they ought to be.

As we approach Dulverton the hills become higher and more densely wooded. Promontory succeeds promontory, sometimes threatening to block the valley altogether. But the river, now widening rapidly, though still sliding shallow over ‘shingly bars,’ finds for itself a way. Presently sweeping into a green *strath* bounded by a steep wooded hill on the one hand, and the bracken-besprinkled park of Baronsdown on the other, we come upon a crumbling ruin.

Alas! the glories of Barlynch Abbey have departed. Here is no

‘Brotherhood of columns old;’

only a few broken walls remain, and the one piece of carved stone to be seen is the head of an ogee arch built into the wall of a new barn. *Tempora mutantur!* A whitewashed farm and its outbuildings stare the poor abbey out of countenance. And, hark! from beneath that decaying wall comes a grunt of satisfaction. Where the holy monk once meditated the homely pig now revels in ‘the husks that the swine do eat’ It is enough to make the pious founder, bold William de Say, turn in his grave, though he has been dead these seven centuries.

At Baronsdown lives in vacation time Dr. Warre, Headmaster of Eton, and proud possessor of the thousandth boy.* His house cannot be called beautiful, but the situation is perfect. Perched on the brow of the hill, sheltered on all sides but one, it looks southward over one

* At the time the above was written, the number of scholars at Eton had, for the first time on record, reached one thousand, much to the delight of Dr. Warre.

of the loveliest wooded vales in England. And however commonplace the old house may be in itself, it is far from commonplace in the eyes of sportsmen; for here long years ago were the kennels of the staghounds, that historic pack, whose music still, at times, comes to wake the echoes of the surrounding hills.

At Hele Bridge the country opens out and we leave our pleasant valley. A road crossing this bridge passes over the hill to Dulverton, a sleepy town on the Barle, a tributary of the Exe, but as large as the river itself. None of its course, however, lies within Devonshire, its current first swelling the Exe a mile below Hele Bridge, which is in the county of Somerset. Of their meeting Westcote quaintly writes: 'Exe, then grown somewhat in strength, hasteth to Dulverton to meet his fair sister Barle, hoping with her rich portion to better and enlarge his state.' The two rivers almost peninsulate the park of Pixton, the residence of the Countess of Carnarvon.

It is only for a mile or two that the hills leave us. They just make room for the Barnstaple railway to pass, and then begin to close in again, as, still following the road by the river, we descend the road towards Tiverton. At Oakford Bridge, a wooden superstructure with massive stone piers, they are as lofty as ever. The surroundings of wood and orchard are pleasant, and the river, here seventy feet across, sparkles down between the hazels in right merry fashion. But the peace of the scene soon comes to an end.

Within the last four or five years the repose of this valley has been broken by the locomotive. Personally I do not love the locomotive. Useful he certainly is, but ornamental he is not. He is noisy; he is obtrusive. Where he gets his iron foot romance dies. And from Dulverton to Exeter he has spoilt the Exe Valley. No longer need the 'blameless tourist' (of the *Saturday Review*) tramp it beneath the wooded hills. He may loll

in the train and také in the scenery *otium cum* (or *sine*) *dignitate*. But he will not see half of it.

Yet he avoids the flies. No pleasure without its pain. No rose without its thorn. Flies big and little infest the riverside in swarms. They haunt the road, they darken the woodland. They cover your sandwich to such an extent that you can scarce eat it without eating *them*. And they certainly eat *you*. For days long have I borne on my body the marks of the tribe of *Gad*. They are altogether detestable.

But the flies are not always with us—the railway is. It gets between us and the river; it cuts off some beautiful vista at its best point; it arouses the worst echoes of the woods; it is noisy, aggressive, out of place. But, lo! I am becoming Ruskinite.

However, not being blameless tourists, and the road being, notwithstanding the railway, a beautiful one, we stick to it as long as possible. It is not everywhere that country sights and scents are so lavish as in this Exe Valley. It is not every road that is bordered by such a profusion of meadowsweet and woodruff, or every river that eddies about such water-plants. In botanical names polysyllabic I make not my boast; but I have never seen elsewhere such masses of 'wild rhubarb' (as the country-folk call it, and the name is good enough for me) as fringe the waters and backwaters of the Exe—never forget-me-nots of larger size or brighter blue. Not that we can look upon all this from the road. As I have said, the railway very often intervenes, and as we draw nigh to Tiverton there are wide meadows to cross. But in these we may wander—if there be no hay-grass—at our will, and under the shadow of some spreading elm study Nature at ease if not with dignity.

Still we are some way from Tiverton yet, and will pay a visit to another and very much smaller town. A couple of miles up the Batham stream, which joins the Exe just

where the railway first begins to make itself obnoxious, is the quiet little town of Bampton, lying in a pretty wooded valley where the prevailing greenery is relieved by the gray rocks of some picturesque limestone quarries. It is noted but for two things: its battle,* which took place in 614, when Cynegilsus, King of the West Saxons, defeated the Britons, and its great autumn fair. The great feature of this fair (which is held under a charter granted nearly six hundred years ago) is the presence of an immense number of Exmoor ponies which arrive in droves straight from the moor. Their condition is, naturally, of the roughest, for they have had no home but their native heath, and no fodder save its coarse herbage, except when snow covers the ground, when trusses of hay are scattered around the border farms to keep them from absolute starvation.

Driven in in this condition, it is needless to say that they are in a very wild, excited state, and on 'fair day' there are, I can assure you, many quieter places in the county of Devon than the streets of Bampton. Fancy a couple of thousand ponies struggling up to the sale ground, indulging in every equine antic under the sun! They fetch all sorts of prices up to about £12, the preference being generally given to those of Sir Thomas Acland, who has been at some pains to keep the stock pure.

Wherever there is horse-dealing there is rascality. Bampton Fair forms no exception. 'It is a common trick,' says a writer in Murray, 'to offer as a colt a wild animal which has never been troubled with a saddle or bridle, but which is, nevertheless, the mother of a numerous offspring.' A local paper,† this very fair, refers to two cheques, one accepted by a farmer, the other by a cattle dealer, both of which were dishonoured.

* Bampton, in Oxfordshire, also claims to be the Beamdune of the Saxon Chronicle.

† *The Devon and Somerset Weekly News.*

From its columns I also learnt how another worthy yeoman, having disposed of his horse for £8, bought another a little later in the day for about £20. The following day the servant waited on his master, and thus began: 'Oi thought thee had sould thic ould mare, meeaster?' 'So Oi ded,' replied the farmer, 'an' maade as much as Oi could of her—'ight poun'.' 'Naw thee hasn't.' 'What ye mane?' said the master angrily; 'Oi sould her, Oi tell 'ee, and bought another grand mare fur twenty poun', wi' a star on her 'ead and 'ind leg.' The man looked at his employer, and then said slowly: '*Oi jist wiped thic white marks off thy ould mare.*'

The graceful tower of St. Peter's Church, rising high above the river's bank, is the first indication that Tiverton is at hand. We pass it as we enter the town, almost overshadowing the ancient castle, once the home of generations of dead and gone Courtenays. Placed on rising ground, on the left bank of the Exe, Tiverton is a pleasant, attractive town, and 'Pam,' who was once its member, was probably as proud of it as any one of its ten thousand inhabitants, who think a deal of its fine church, of its lace works, of its school, founded by Peter Blundell, in the reign of Queen Bess, of its bridge, and of its castle, which latter, for some inexplicable reason, has received scant notice at the hands of writers of guide-books.

This castle of Tiverton is said to have been commenced about the year 1106, by Richard de Ripariis, ancestor of the present Earl of Devon, to whom the manor had been granted by King Henry I. In his family the estate continued till the Marquis of Exeter was attainted for conspiring with Cardinal Pole against King Hal. It now belongs to the Carews, another old Devonshire family.

The most noticable feature from the road is a fine Perpendicular gateway; but the earliest portion appears

to be a round tower at the angle of the wall, over against the church. Near it, also facing the church, are the remains of an Early English chapel, and beyond that a large square building, of which the lower part was probably a kitchen, and the upper a banqueting-hall. The latter is lit by lancet windows, though it is difficult to see them, so thick is the ivy. A subterranean passage is said to communicate with Gold Street, but what useful purpose it could have served nobody seems to know.

In the Civil War (1645) the castle was bombarded by Fairfax. An enormous breach in the 'banqueting-hall' is shown as the spot where a cannon-ball, entering, killed the nurse, while the child in her arms was uninjured.

The chest that figures in that most tragic of stories, 'The Mistletoe Bough' of Haines Bailey, is preserved in that part of the castle now converted into a dwelling-house, and which dates in great part from the sixteenth century. This celebrated chest is of Italian make, and is beautifully adorned with poker work. Everyone knows the common story, how that a lady of the Cope family of Bramshill, on the evening of her wedding day, proposed a game of hide and seek, ran off, hid herself, and was never seen again. Some years later, the housekeeper, going to the great chest, was horrified to find a skeleton clad in the fragments of a wedding gown. One does not like to place the happening of so romantic a story in foreign lands, but so it was. The event took place in Italy, and it was from thence that the chest was brought to Bramshill.* The facts are told by Rogers, in a poem of some pathos. According to him, the bride's name was Ginevra Orsini, who in her fifteenth year became the bride of Francesco Doria.

' At the nuptial feast,
When all sat down, the bride herself was wanting,
Nor was she to be found ! Her father cried :
" 'Tis but to make a trial of our love !"

* The 'Bridal Chest of Bramshill,' by Sir W. Cope, Bart. (not published).

And filled his glass to all ; but his hand shook,
And soon from guest to guest the panic spread.
'Twas but that instant she had left Francesco,
Laughing and looking back and flying still,
Her ivory tooth imprinted on his finger.
But now, alas ! she was not to be found,
Nor from that hour could anything be guessed
But that she was not !'

Francesco, driven to despair, fell fighting against the infidel. Fifty years passed away, and the chest, which had lain in some out-of-the-way corner, was moved :

' It burst and fell, and lo ! a skeleton,
With here and there a pearl, an emerald stone,
A golden clasp, clasping a shred of gold ;
All else had perished, save a wedding-ring
And a small seal, her mother's legacy,
Engraven with a name—the name of both—
"Ginevra."'

As I stood looking down upon the fatal chest, the owner touched the spring lock which caused the poor girl's imprisonment and death. 'If I shut the chest now,' he said, 'you could never open it even with the key, unless you knew the secret.' I turned away with something very like a shudder, glad enough to pass down the broad staircase and out of sight of an object whose associations were so gruesome.

It was an agreeable change to pass from the castle into the church of St. Peter, a large and very handsome building with four aisles. Few churches have an exterior more ornate ; the south porch and chapel, built by John Greenway, in 1517,* being almost covered with sculpture, representing armorial bearings and sacred symbols, besides sundry ships and woolpacks, emblematical of the trade of the founder, a wool-merchant. Both porch and chapel have good groined roofs, and over the inner door

* On the exterior of the east wall of this chapel is inscribed, 'John Greenway founded this Chapel A.D. MDXVII., died A.D. MDXXIX.,' and over four figures of angels holding escutcheons this couplet :

'Whilst we think well and think t'amend
Time passeth away and death's the end.'

of the former is a bas-relief of the Assumption, with kneeling figures of the founder and his wife Joan.

In the chancel are two altar-tombs, and in the north aisle hang paintings of the Adoration of the Magi, after Rubens, and of the angel appearing to Peter in prison, the latter by Richard Cosway, R.A., a native of the town. Close to this picture is a Norman doorway, the earliest piece of work in the church, part of the fabric built by Bishop Leofric in the reign of the Conqueror.

Until the time of the present Rector church arrangements at Tiverton were of a nature somewhat peculiar. Once upon a time, I cannot say when, a Rector of Tiverton complained to the lord, one of the Courtenays, that his income was too small to enable him to keep up the hospitality expected of him. The Earl's remedy was somewhat drastic. He promptly divided the living into four parts, giving, says Westcote, 'the choice of the four prebends to the grumbler, who was thereby taught to live on a crown that could not live on a pound.' This may have served the Rector right, but the arrangement can not have been good for the people of Tiverton. Four priests with apparently equal authority attached to one church could scarcely *always* live in harmony; often the house must have been divided against itself.

But I must tell you a little more about John Greenway of pious memory, I suppose the greatest benefactor that Tiverton has ever had, not even excepting Peter Blundell, of whom more presently. John Greenway was in his younger days a poor weaver, and his rise in life was, it is said, due to a dream. Three times he saw in a vision how that he met a man on London Bridge who rode a white horse, and said that he must come to London, for he had something of importance to communicate. 'Mazed,' as the Devonshire people say, John travelled to London, took up his station on the bridge, and waited. Presently a man mounted on a white steed *did* ride up,

and, after staring hard at the weaver, thus addressed him: 'Good fellow, I have dreamt of thee. Go thou back to Tiverton town, and thou shalt find a pot of gold.' He indicated the place. The weaver hurried home, found the magic pot, and made his fortune.

It seems strange that this very communicative stranger did not himself go down and secure the treasure; but we have observed that the 'stranger' in these stories never does. We put the question, however, to our informant: 'Why did not the stranger take the pot himself?' 'He didn't believe in the dream, sir,' was the reply.

Oh fatal scepticism! And so of this stranger and his white horse we hear nothing further. As the 'great Twin Brethren,' on *their* white horses, he said his say; then

'Like a blast away he passed,
And no man saw him more.'

Anyhow, there is the crock (at least, so we were assured) carved on the chapel wall, among the ships and wool-packs.

The almshouses built by this worthy citizen in Gold Street are interesting. There are niches in the walls with figures of saints, and at one end is a chapel, entered by a rich Perpendicular porch, with a figure of St. Peter over the inner arch. Under the parapet runs this inscription: 'Have grace ye men and ever pray for the Souls of John and Jone Greenwaye,' and again under a female figure in a niche beneath, 'p for John and Jone Gree.' A like request is under a figure of St. Peter in another niche. This Tiverton worthy appears to have held his divers good qualities in very low esteem indeed. Surely no man before or since has so often asked for the prayers of the passers-by.

The Blundell's School, where readers of 'Lorna Doone' will remember 'gert John Ridd' was educated,

is not the building where young Tiverton now imbibes knowledge. The old house is gone, and a new one takes its place. So I suppose the boys no longer get a holiday when the flooded Loman rises over the 'P B,' the initials of the founder, cut in one of the stones, as was the custom in days of yore. This little Loman, by the way, helps to make up the name of the town, which was once Twyford or Twoford town, being on fords both of the Exe and Loman. I have, I find, barely mentioned good Peter Blundell, that worthy clothier, who was almost as great a benefactor to his native town as John Greenway. Born in a humble position, he had little book-learning, and appears to have keenly felt the want of educational advantages. He determined, therefore, that the youth of Tiverton in the future should be better educated than himself. 'Though I am not myself a scholar,' said he, 'I will be the means of making more scholars than any scholar in England.' And so he built and endowed Tiverton School.

CHAPTER III

THE EXE—FROM TIVERTON TO THE SEA.

Bickleigh—The King of the Beggars—Rewe—The Culm—Cullompton—Exeter
—The Cathedral—The Guildhall—Some Ancient Churches—Drew's Weir
—Salmon Pool Weir—Countess Weir and Isabella de Fortibus—Topsham
—A Ghost Story—Estuary of the Exe—Exmouth—Littleham—A Nine-
teenth-Century Excommunication—The Mouth of the River.

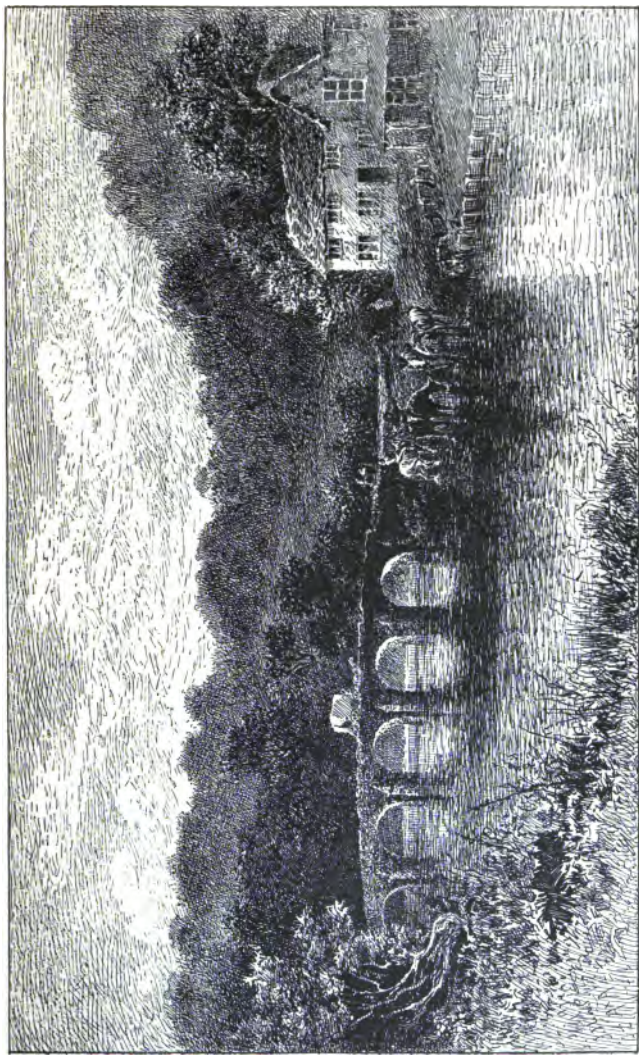
AND now southwards to Exeter. We begin by crossing to the western bank of the river, getting, a mile from the town, a pleasant view of white Collipriest House on a gentle slope above the water, and soon reach Bickleigh, four miles down—a pretty spot, though more or less spoilt by the railway. Here the road again crosses the river over a picturesque old bridge of five arches. On the hill to the left the red tower of the church peeps above the trees. Beyond some interesting monuments to the Carews, the church has nothing of special interest. A building that attracts more attention is the ivy-covered Tudor mansion—or what remains of it—Bickleigh Court. This old home of the Carews is now a farm, but enough remains to speak to its former glories, especially the massive gateway and vaulted passage leading into the garden at the back.

Here was born, in 1693, that extraordinary character, Bamfylde Moore Carew, 'King of the Beggars.' He was the son of the Rector, the Rev. Theodore Carew, and one of a numerous family. At Tiverton School,

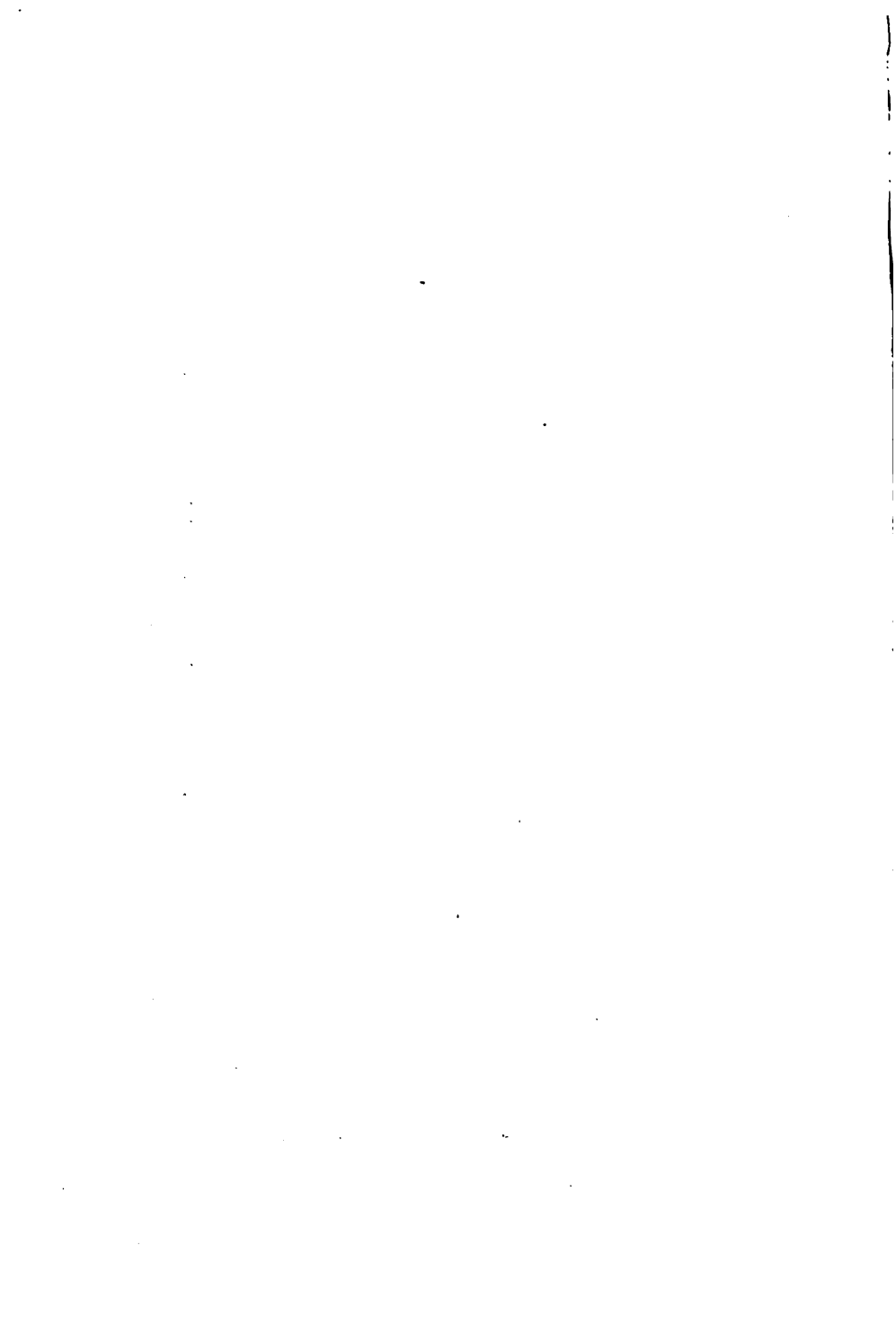
he showed signs of considerable ability, but is said to have preferred pleasure to work, and soon became the leader in all sports, taking a special interest in the hunting of a pack of hounds, maintained by certain of the more wealthy scholars. It was an incident in connection with these hounds which led to his adopting the wild career which he only forsook at the very last. He and his companions chased a deer; the farmers complained, and Carew, alarmed at the threats of the school authorities, took refuge with some gipsies with whom he had become acquainted, and with them remained, soon becoming an incurable nomad.

Carew was a wonderful actor. 'He has,' says a writer in the *Western Antiquary*, 'imposed upon the same company three or four times a day under different disguises, and with a different tale of distress. Sometimes a distressed clergyman, now a shipwrecked sailor, a footman, an old woman, and so forth, as occasion directed. He was a man of strong memory and pleasant address, and could assume the manners of a gentleman with as much ease as those of any other character.' When Clause Patch, their 'king,' became too old to reign, the gipsies chose him as his successor, and for forty years he ruled over them. He appears to have been proud of his sovereignty; for when Mr. Drake urged him to return to his family, he replied, 'No, Mr. Drake; I would rather be King of the Beggars than King of England.' Yet he seems never to have lost his gentlemanly feelings, and either these or repentance, or perhaps the assistance offered by his kinsman, Sir Thomas Carew, of Hacombe, induced him to lay down the sceptre. He died at Bickleigh in 1759—'a melancholy instance of misused talent, an exhibition of a living lie.' His wife, Mary Gray, predeceased him, leaving a daughter, who, after her father's death, returned to the station of life which he ought never to have left, and made a good marriage.*

* *Western Antiquary*, vol. vi., p. 274; vol. vii., p. 86.



THE EXE AT BICKLEIGH BRIDGE. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED, FROM A SKETCH BY J. LL. W. PAGE.



The valley widens again, the hills receding from the river till it flows almost through a plain. This part of its course is pretty, but cannot be called particularly interesting. Fishermen only will take the trouble to follow its windings. So we stick to the road, passing through the villages of Rewe, where there is a massive churchyard cross, and Stoke Canon, to within three miles of Exeter, when the river again comes into view, sweeping below Upton Pines, the seat of Lord Iddesleigh.

Notwithstanding its volume—for it is now a fine stream—we see no boats on its surface. This is in part accounted for by the numerous weirs, though even without these impediments the swiftness of the current would still impede navigation. Just below Stoke Canon the road crosses the sedgy Culm, the most considerable of its tributaries.

The Culm, which has a course of some twenty miles, flows from its source in the Blackdown Hills through a country wholly pastoral—a country very much like that through which we have passed since leaving Tiverton, but more level. You will pass for miles through rich green meadows, where the red Devon cattle stand nearly up to their knees in the juicy herbage, or cool themselves in the bright waters. If you have the pencil of a Claude, you will find ‘material,’ and to spare; and if you do *not* believe with Dr. Johnson that a fishing-rod has a fool at one end and a worm at the other, you may make yourself happy with the trout. But if you are neither artist nor piscator, the soft beauty of the landscape will after a while begin to pall a little. There is, as it were, so little to take hold of. Yet there are some beautiful spots on the Culm—such as Killerton Park, where the Aclands dwell, where the steep woods come down nearly to the water’s edge; and the little town of Cullompton, which has a fine fifteenth-century church, the lofty red tower standing out well against the low wooded hills behind.

Indeed, this church deserves a particular visit, for it has a splendid screen, finer even than that of Bradninch, further down the valley, as well as mural paintings of saintly figures, discovered when the church was restored. As at Tiverton, there is a chapel built by a local worthy—one Lane, a clothier, who appears to have taken a hint from John Greenway, for the walls are sculptured with devices illustrating his trade. This is the more likely, as the chapel was erected only eleven years after the one at the larger town.

At Cullompton the Culm is little more than a brook. It dwindles rapidly as you pass onwards towards the hills, by the little villages of Willand, Uffculme (noted for its ales), Culmstock, and Hemyock. The last-named is the most interesting, boasting the remains of a castle, once used by the Roundheads as a prison. Soon we are among the combes of the Blackdown Hills, where the river takes its source.

From the confluence of Culm and Exe, the road winds, now up, now down, along the slopes of wooded hills—a park-like country, dotted with many a mansion. In about four miles we reach the ‘Faithful City,’ standing high above the vale.

The history of the capital of the West is too well known to demand more than briefest mention here. It was the ‘Caer Esc’ of the Briton, the ‘Isca Damnoniorum’ of the Roman. Possibly the Dane, too, would have given it a name could he have effected a permanent settlement, for he wintered here in 876, and pretty well sacked the city in 1003. Its situation is one of considerable natural beauty, spreading as it does over the summit and slopes of a long hill, round which the Exe flows to its estuary. Perhaps the best view is from the meadows near the Great Western Railway, some three miles below the city, whence the fine Norman towers of the cathedral may be

seen rising, as they have risen for nearly eight centuries, above the clustering houses. Of Rougemont Castle, the other most notable bit of old Exeter, built in the days of the Conqueror, but little remains. There is a Norman gateway, a curtain wall, and three bastions bordering Northernhay Public Gardens, and that is all. It is almost needless to say that the reference to it which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Richard Crookback is stuffed into every local guide-book as a matter of course.

A traveller named Clarke, who, a hundred years ago, wrote an account of a 'Tour through the South of England,' says of Exeter: 'Travellers meet with little or nothing worth seeing here. A cathedral with a painted window, an extensive terrace with fine prospects, are all that would detain the curious.' But an individual whose principal praise for Wells Cathedral was that it was 'well swept and *whitewashed* (!),' and who regarded the magnificent west front as a 'collection of cherubim and seraphim, mitredom and martyrdom, kings, demi-gods and devils . . . a spectacle more unique than any I have ever met with before or ever desire to see again,' is scarcely likely to be enthusiastic over the cathedral of Exeter.

A cathedral with a painted window! Happily we have passed the days of churchwarden Gothic, of the hewing down of rood-screens and the planing smooth of bench-ends! Men have awoke to a proper appreciation of the beautiful architecture of our churches, and never again will villainous whitewash conceal the delicate tints of stonework, the frescoes on the wall. It is instructive to compare Archdeacon Freeman's opinion of Exeter Cathedral with that of unappreciative Clarke. He says that it is perhaps 'the most perfect specimen in the world of bilateral (or right and left hand) symmetry. Not only does aisle answer to aisle, and pillar to pillar, and window-tracery to window-tracery, but also chapel to chapel, screen to screen, and even tomb to tomb, and

canopy to canopy.' And this is the more strange because the edifice was some four hundred years in building.*

Indeed, there can be little doubt that, small though it be, the cathedral church of St. Peter is not only one of the most perfect, but, for its size, one of the most beautiful in the kingdom. Look at the weathered west front, clustered thick with figures (whether there are any 'demi-gods and devils,' I cannot say); look at the shafts of Purbeck marble that form the pillars of the nave; the flying buttresses; the Norman towers, so much more graceful than Norman towers usually are! Then there is the famous screen, with its sixty-eight figures five hundred years old; the minstrel-gallery on the north side of the nave, as old, if not older; and the towering steeple-shaped throne, a finely-carved piece of woodwork, fifty-two feet high, and which cost only *twelve guineas*! Space would fail were we to detail minor objects of interest. That of which Freeman, Mackenzie Walcott, and a score more, have written, and written well, needs no further description here. Besides, there are guide-books without number telling you all about it. Is it not written in the pages of Murray, Worth, Baddeley and Ward?

The mutilation of the statues on the west front is lamentable, and is, of course, attributed to the forces of the Parliament. But it is not fair to lay *all* the blame on the soldiers of Fairfax.† Both Time and Superstition have had a hand in the destruction. Here is a story which, if not vouched for by competent authority, would be scarce credible. A Teignmouth doctor was attending a poor woman suffering from a sore. One day he found

* Camden: 'This church was about four hundred years in building, and yet the symmetry of it is such as one might easily imagine the work of one man.'

† Still, the Puritans *did* destroy the cloisters, and the cathedral was actually partitioned into two meeting-houses: one for the Presbyterians, the other for the Independents!—Walcott's 'Cathedrals of the United Kingdom,' p. 95.

the wound very much inflamed, evidently owing to the application of some gritty substance, of course applied without his authority. For some time he could get no answer to his questions, but finally the husband gave way, and, stooping down, dragged a piece of stone from under the bed, muttering sulkily, 'Tis nothing but Peter's stone, and here he is.' It seems that the poor man had walked from Teignmouth to Exeter, and under cover of darkness flung stones at the figures on the west front until he had detached an arm, which he carried home. Some of the stone had been ground fine, mixed with lard, and spread over the sore.*

Exeter was not always the seat of a bishop. Until 1050 the neighbouring town of Crediton had that honour, though the fine fifteenth-century church that is now its great attraction has no remains of the ancient cathedral of Devon. Nor, indeed, has the cathedral itself. The earliest part was that built by Bishop Warelwast in 1112—the two Norman transeptal towers. The remainder of the building was burnt when King Stephen stormed the castle and drove out the men of Matilda. It was rebuilt by Bishop Marshall, and in 1230 Bishop Bronescombe added the Lady Chapel and chapter-house. With the exception of the west screen, the remainder of the fabric was designed by Bishop Quivil, who lived in the reign of Edward I., and whose plans were faithfully carried out by his successors. The only piece of Perpendicular work about the cathedral is the east window, and even that, I believe, was once of earlier date, the present tracery being added in 1391. The two finest specimens of modern work are the alabaster reredos—some years since a bone of legal contention—and the pulpit to Bishop Patteson, murdered twenty years ago in the South Pacific.

There is something very pleasant and peaceful about

* 'Devonshire Poems, Customs, Superstitions,' etc., by Elias Tozer.

the surroundings of this old gray building. There are the bright green lawns of the close, shaded by tall elms, the abiding-place of that clerical-looking bird, the rook. Staid-looking houses environ it, some even picturesque—notably, one by a passage leading into High Street. And the mother church is guarded by three faithful children—St. Martin's, St. Petrock's, and St. Mary Major—all abutting on the cathedral yard.

In picturesque and busy High Street projects the time-blackened front of the Guildhall. It was built late in the sixteenth century, but has been repaired so often since that the architecture has become rather a medley, though fortunately without destroying its interesting appearance. The hall itself is of the century preceding, dating from 1466. Among the portraits the Princess Henrietta, born at Exeter in 1644, when her unhappy father was holding Court there—you may see the font specially made for her baptism in the cathedral—looks down from one frame; grim General Monk, who brought her brother back to his throne, from another. Both are from the brush of Lely.

To an antiquary this ancient city is full of delights. But it must not be forgotten, first, that all are not antiquaries; secondly, that we are writing of country rather than of town. So we can only mention the queer little church of St. Pancras, Norman and Early English, with one corbel, as Mr. Ward says, 'possibly Saxon'; or St. Martin's, dating back to the Conquest; or St. Mary Major's, with its fine screen. And now, though there are several other buildings deserving of notice, we must return to our river.

Below the city, dammed by Drew's Weir, the Exe forms a fine reach, of a summer's evening crowded with pleasure-boats. A mile and a half further down is another weir, known as Salmon Pool Weir, on account of the numbers of that fish that a skilful angler may there bring

to hand. So that the sea cannot get to the faithful city if it would. It reaches Salmon Weir, however, though fresh and salt water mingle in a very feeble sort of way, and that only at high tide. Flowing through rich meadows, the river soon comes to the hamlet of Countess Weir and the bridge built on the site of that weir, constructed by strong-minded and most appropriately named Isabella de *Fortibus*, Countess of Albemarle and Devon, some six hundred years ago.

There are so many versions of what this lady did that it is difficult to arrive at the truth—at any rate, in details. The common story is that the Mayor or Portreeve—or whatever he was in those days—denied the Countess's right to the first selection of some salmon in Exeter market. For this very trivial offence—at least, it seems so to us—the haughty lady threw a weir across the river, thus closing the navigation to the city, till then a seaport. These may or may not be the bare facts, but Devonshire wit has made more of the story. They say that it is called Countess' Weir—they pronounce it *Ware* about Exeter—because the masculine Countess *swore* at the Mayor when he refused to hand over the salmon. Countess' (s) Weir is certainly about as appalling a pun as any anathematized by the great Doctor.* But, whatever the true state of the case, this high-handed proceeding proved most disastrous to the city. Not that its fathers sat down quietly under the insult. Every effort was made to get the obstruction removed, and the right of navigation was admitted; but the Courtenays were too powerful. And it was not till the reign of Henry VIII. that the authorities were able to cut the present canal, which at first commenced at Topsham, but has since been extended to Turf.

And now, 'if I be not wearisome,' you should have the other principal version, which I gather from Mr. Worth's

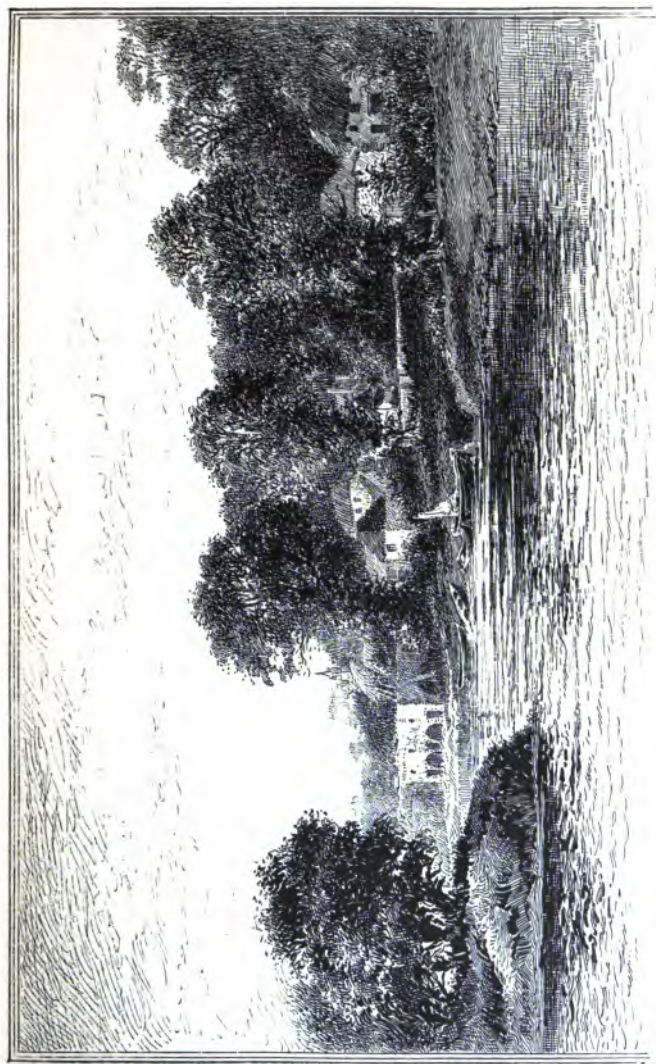
* 'He who perpetrates a pun will pick a pocket.'—Dr. Johnson.

'History of Devon.' He says that Isabella, 'having quarrelled with the citizens, as the readiest means of injuring them, threw what has since been called Countess Weir Bridge across the Exe.* The citizens appealed to the law, which was clearly on their side, and at length an opening was made in the weir through which ships could pass.' A quarrel some years later was, he says, the cause of the cutting of the canal. One day there were three 'pots' of fish only for sale at the market, and the caterers of the Earl and the Bishop each wanted them. The Mayor being appealed to, gave one to each, and kept the third for the public—a very righteous division—whereupon, says Izacke, 'the Earl in his mighty displeasure destroyed the haven—a mighty matter about a pott of fish.' Now you have all that I can tell you, and must choose between common report, old Westcote, and a more modern historian. Which is right I know not.

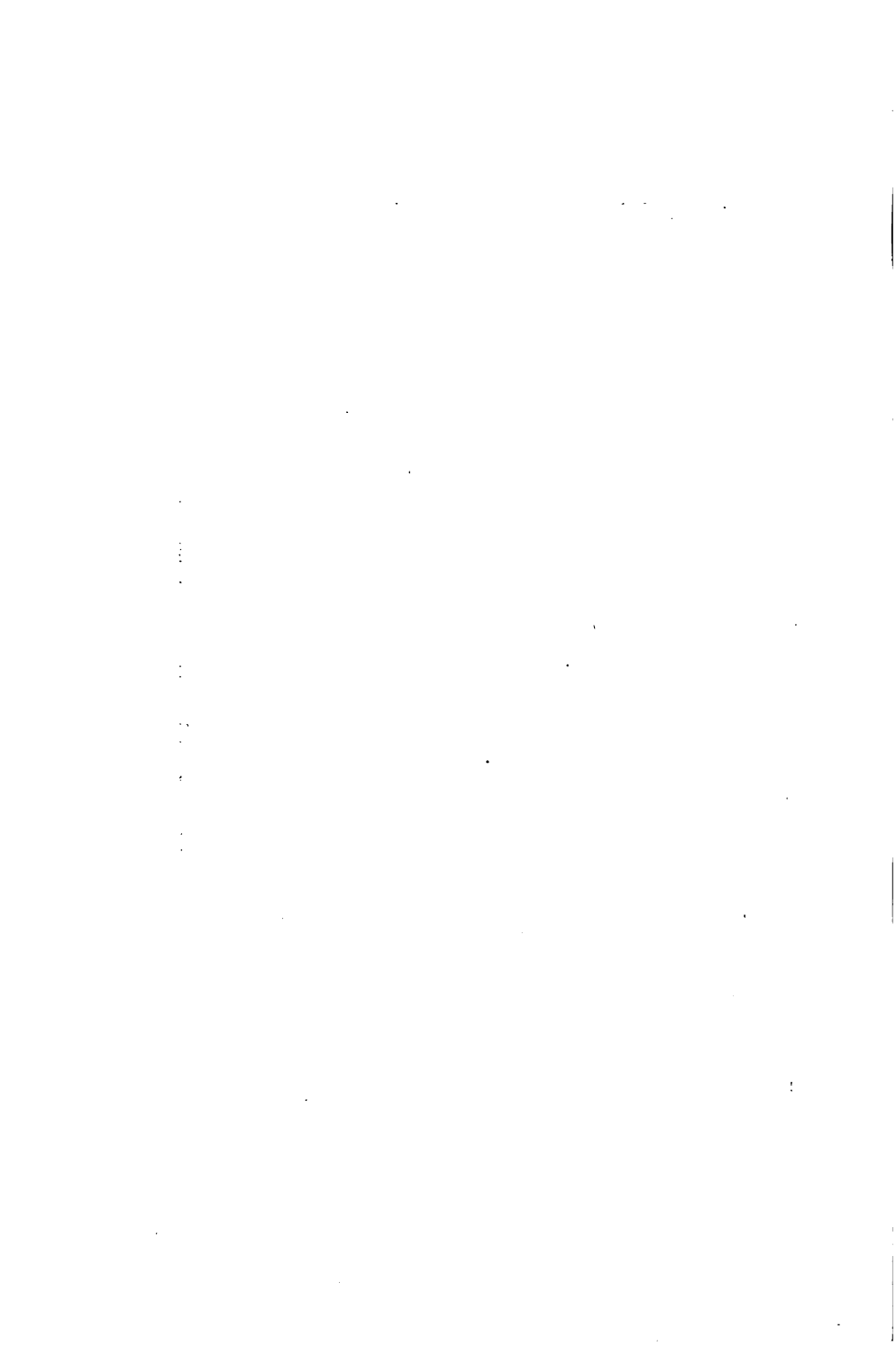
The bridge is rather a fine one, and the country about it rich and pastoral—bright green meadows shaded by tall elms, past which the river winds seawards. In the foreground, over against the bridge, a few poles support a beam, whereon are spread the salmon nets, which may nowadays be drawn and their contents disposed of without fear of incurring the wrath of anyone, Countess or otherwise.

Another mile or two of level mead cut into by little 'pills,' at high tide filled with salt water, a decrease in the number of elms, a more marshy look in the appearance of things generally, and the river reaches its estuary—reaches it somewhat suddenly and unexpectedly at the waterside town of Topsham, a little place stretching for a mile along the shore, and which you can see at once has an air about it that speaks of 'better days.'

* Westcote says that she merely erected certain weirs for the benefit of her mills, leaving a passage of thirty feet for vessels, and that it was Earl Hugh (the second) who completely stopped the river, which was further barred by Earl Edward, his grandson.



COUNTLESS WEIR. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED.



Over Topsham *Ichabod* may indeed be written. Gone is the trade with countries beyond sea, taken by the ship canal opposite. Gone is the trade with Newfoundland, which, long after the said canal was opened, formed an important factor in the prosperity of the little town. Gone, or nearly so, is the shipbuilding too. The town sleeps on, a restful air brooding over its ancient houses, where years ago Dutch smugglers stowed away many a cask of schnapps and contraband tobacco in the innumerable cupboards lining the walls. Some of them are so deep and dark that a light must be fetched ere their abysses can be gauged. I saw one hewn out of the solid rock.

Topsham is just the place for a ghost story. And a ghost story it boasts, and, what is more, one, though 'taken up' by the London papers, never explained. I can very well remember *me puero* hearing of the cloven hoof footprints (of a biped) that for several mornings in succession appeared on the snow. The odd thing about them was that they went in a straight line right over walls, and even houses, and behind them might occasionally be seen a trailing mark as though a *tail* had been dragged. The inference was, of course, obvious; the suggestions of Fleet Street, that the marks were those of some strange wild-fowl, and so forth, were scouted by the lower classes. It was *he*, and nothing else. The rising generation are not so credulous, but very few of their fathers—as one who tells the story says—would have dared to stir from their hearths after nightfall.

Hardly two houses in the principal street—the Strand, they call it—are alike. Here, corpulent-looking low windows; there, heavy lattices. Along the river-front yards and yards of fishing-net are drying in the sun, ready at the proper time to enclose the unwary salmon.

From a point near the church—or, better still, from where the Strand abruptly ends at the water's edge—

there is a very complete view of the estuary. We will suppose that the tide is in. There is something very sparkling and exhilarating about the white flashing river, with its numerous little yachts tacking about dodging the shoals and sandbanks which lie hidden on either hand, raising their heads only at low water when Exe meanders in a doubtful sort of way among the flats as though uncertain which were the shortest cut to the sea. The view, *then*, is not so inviting. However, the prospect across stream does not ebb and flow. Powderham and its wooded park—‘near which Exe taketh his last tribute with a wider chanel and curled waves’*—are always there; so is the wooded range of Haldon, with Lord Haldon’s belvedere tower rising against the sky far away to the right, and the green hills sloping down to the marshy meadows between Exminster and Starcross. Southwards, against the line of sea and sky, softened by distance, are the terraces of Exmouth.

The estuary widens. At Lympstone, the next village (famous for oysters), it is a mile across, but still bearing only the smallest craft, for the shallowness that has been the characteristic of Exe all the way from the moors clings to it still. Below Starcross one or two ships lie at anchor in the deeper water, and now and again a tug comes heavily up the channel towing a schooner for the mouth of the canal. The further shore is low and flat, but on our side a low red headland or two juts out, an earnest of the beautiful line of coast stretching on both sides of the river’s mouth for miles. And so Exmouth draws nigh.

We are told that, ‘in the reign of King John, Exmouth was one of the principal ports in Devonshire.’ Perhaps it was. ‘Among the blind a one-eyed man is king,’ and there were few ports in the county seven hundred years ago worth taking Custom dues from. The trade of

* Risdon.

Exmouth, such as it was, has long since been a minor factor in its well-being. Even in Camden's time 'Exan-mouth' was 'known for nothing but the bare name and the fisher hutts there.' It is *par excellence* a watering-place, and, like other towns of that ilk, owes its success to the dictum of an invalid of position—a judge—who, attributed his recovery to the joint effects of its sea-air and sea-water.

To the traveller upon the Great Western Railway across the estuary, the lines of villas stretching along the hillside, dominated by the tall church tower, wear a pleasant aspect. But a nearer approach does not increase the charm. Not that the town is otherwise than cheerful, but distance lends its enchantment. The fact is that Exmouth is, as fashionable watering-places go, neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red-herring, but in a transition state from which it may, and doubtless will, ere long emerge into a condition more satisfactory. I speak, be it remembered, of the town proper, which no one, I imagine, will venture to call handsome. But, with all its defects, it has very much gone ahead since 1782, when a letter written to Polwhele informs us that 'Exmouth boasts no public rooms or assemblies, save one card-assembly in an inconvenient apartment at one of the inns on Monday evenings.* The company meet at half after five, and break up at ten. They play at shilling whist or twopenny quadrille. We have very few young persons here,' goes on this amusing correspondent, 'and no diversions—no *belles dames* amusing to the unmarried, but some *beldames* unamusing to the married.†

On the hillside above the town the roads and walks are well laid out, and many a fine house rises from the pretty gardens, where, in this mild climate, both

* Can this be one of the causes which led an Exeter gentleman desirous of founding a licensed meeting-house to think Exmouth 'so wicked a place that it would be in vain to attempt anything *there*'?

† The Rev. Wm. Webb's 'Memorials of Exmouth.'

shrubs and flowers live happy lives. And the views of the surrounding country from the Beacon are lovely. I do not know how many artists have painted the panorama—the blue sea, the broad estuary, the white houses of Starcross, the towers of Powderham, and behind the long line of Haldon. The Exmouth people say that at sunset the effect is particularly fine; but visible sunsets nowadays (indeed, sunshine at all) are rare events, and I cannot speak from personal experience. However, there can be no doubt that the scenery about Exmouth is infinitely more taking than the town itself. As Bishop Temple said, gazing at the view from the steps of the Vicarage, ‘Exmouth is a place to look *from*.’

Exmouth, though it boasts a large modern church, or rather chapel of ease, is in the parishes of Littleham and Withycombe Raleigh. The former has a pretty church, to which there is a pleasant walk by lane and footpath. The chancel and chantry are the oldest parts of Littleham Church, both dating from the thirteenth century. The nave and tower were built about 1400; the aisle is of about the time of Henry VII.; and the screen, a very handsome one, apparently dates from the same period.* In this church, in 1805, might have been witnessed a very strange scene—for the nineteenth century—the excommunication *coram populo* of a woman. One Susan Chamberlain, condemned by a judgment of the Spiritual Court for an offence which is not mentioned, walked in a sheet bearing a white wand (symbolical, I suppose, of the ancient taper), between the churchwardens, from the churchyard gate to the church. In the porch she left her shoes, and entered barefoot. Here beneath the gaze of hundreds of eyes she was solemnly excommunicated. The function seems to have been performed at the expense of the parish, as the churchwardens’ accounts for the following year announce that they ‘paid y^e

* ‘Memorials of Exmouth.’

expençe for S. Chamberlain's penance, £3 5s. 8d.' This, to my ignorance, seems a large sum for damning an erring fellow-creature.

* * * * *

Let us stroll round by the little dock, where a few schooners and brigantines are lying, and see in what manner Exe meets the sea.

The river-mouth is much narrowed by the sandy horn of the warren. Between it and the pier the current is deep enough now, and swift as it is deep; but there is a tradition that, less than a hundred years ago, a milkmaid was in the habit of wading across at low tide to milk her cows. For a considerable distance along the beach below the sea-wall, and well outside, too, the outgoing tide swirls strongly, and no one but the best of swimmers should venture more than a few yards from shore. Outside, the river and the sea between them have built up a bar of sand, where, at low tide, the gulls hover in myriads, darting with delighted cries upon the flotsam and jetsam—tit-bits which Exe has brought down from the towns above. If Exmouth town be, well, not of the first order, there are many spots less pleasant than Exmouth beach on a fine summer morning.

CHAPTER IV

THE OTTER AND THE AXE.

Budleigh Salterton—The River Otter—Otterton—Bicton—Woodbury Castle—Newton Poppleford—Ottery St. Mary—Cadhay—Hembury—Honiton—First View of the Axe—Seaton—Mouth of the Axe—Axmouth Village—Bindon—The Rustic and his Physic—Hocksdown—Musbury—Ashe and the Duke of Marlborough—Lord North and the Harvesters—Colyton Church—Shute—*Lobelia urens*—The Battle of Brunanberg—Axminster—Newenham Abbey—Bow Bridge and its Story—Coaxden and Charles II.—Forde Abbey—Winsham—Axknoller.

FIVE miles east of Exmouth is Budleigh Salterton—‘as pleasant a little retreat as can be imagined for those who desire, without making hermits of themselves, a temporary respite from the hum-drum of every-day life.’ The town is situate in a valley, and down the side of the principal street a tiny brook babbles to the sea, and you cross to the houses over the most diminutive of bridges. On the slopes above, and of late years spreading even further over the hills, villas are scattered, their gardens a wealth of blossom. Such is Budleigh Salterton.

The cliffs are of red sandstone of no great elevation just here, but rising further east into precipices three, four, and even five hundred feet high. Here and there is a break in the barrier, and a clear trout stream—they are seldom more—descends from the fertile country inland. If we trace them upward, we shall find many a picturesque hamlet of cob and thatch clustering round gray church tower, and perhaps an old manor-house, birthplace of

some hero who has made his mark on England's history. Where, for instance, is a more old-world village than Newton Poppelford, on the banks of the Otter? or a more beautiful church than that of St. Mary of Ottery? while less than an hour's walk from its marge we come upon Hays Barton, where Raleigh was born, and, nearer the river, the pretty village of East Budleigh, where you may still see the family pew, inscribed with the date 1537.

A mile, or thereabouts, to the east of Budleigh Salterton, this little river Otter enters the sea—enters it rather ignominiously over a bank of shingle. But within this bank it forms a reach, bounded, on the one hand, by green level pastures; on the other, by a low red cliff. Nearly all the way from its source in the Blackdown Hills the Otter comes down a valley 'lew'—as the Devon folk have it—and pleasant, for it is sheltered from east winds by the long range of downs which run northwards towards Honiton. Here are no boulders, no rock scenery; none, in short, of the elements of grandeur which we shall see about the rivers further west. The scene is throughout calm and pastoral, and the redness of the soil imparts to the whole valley a look peculiarly warm and fertile. This redness is especially noticeable at Otterton, the first village up from the sea, where even the 'cob' cottages—cob is a mixture of clay and straw—show red where the plaster has peeled away. Red, too, is the tower of the church, contrasting rather oddly with the gray limestone of the body of the building—a large and handsome structure, re-erected by the late Lady Rolle. Otterton is a pretty village—especially in summer, when the grove of chestnut-trees at the entrance just over the bridge is in bloom, and the woods around are 'thick with leafy honours.' Indeed, I know no prettier view anywhere in the valley than that by the waterside as you approach the village—the graystone bridge, the

emerald pastures dotted with sheep, the village rising a little from the water's edge, and, just below, a crumbling bluff of sandstone, crowned by a few trees, reflected in the quiet waters ; for here the Otter has fallen into quiet ways, and left its shingle and pebbles far behind.

Over against the grove of chestnuts are the remains of a small priory, founded by that kingly scoundrel John, and once the property of the rich abbey of St. Michael in Normandy. Above it, right under the shadow of the church, is an old manor-house, dating from the days of the Tudors. It is nowadays devoted to humble uses. The schoolmaster occupies one part, cottagers another ; but the stone escutcheon over the porch tells of a time when 'the family' lived there, long before Budleigh Salterton was thought of, and when even Exmouth was little more than a name.

Across the river are the gardens of Bicton, the seat of the Hon. Mark Rolle, celebrated for their rare trees and shrubs ; and away behind them, some three miles distant, on the high ground, is the Roman earthwork of Woodbury Castle, utilized as a camping-ground in the days when 'Boney' was a household terror all along this coast.

It is not very difficult work to follow the Otter. Level meadows fringe its course for miles. But, except to a fisherman, a route 'over hedges and ditches' will prove fatiguing, and we can very well see all we wish from the road following the eastern bank. And by this we will travel till we reach the stone bridge under Harpford Woods, and cross to the village of Newton Poppleford.

This village consists of a long street stretching up the sloping ground from the river. The irregular line of whitewashed and thatched cottages, with their tall square chimneys, generally facing the road, is quaint and picturesque. And up beyond the church—a queer little building, with a decaying sandstone tower and slender

oaken pillars—is the much-sketched Cannon Inn, with deep eaves and a projecting porch, to which you ascend by three or four steps.

Leaving Newton Poppleford (which should, I fancy, be spelt *Pebbleford*, because it takes its name from the oval pebbles washed up by the Otter, and used too often for road-mending—and most execrable mending it is), we pass by Harpford with its wooded slopes, and one or two other hamlets, till presently Ottery St. Mary comes into view above the eastern bank, very much to its detriment half hidden by a hideous brush factory and by the scarcely less ugly iron arch which here spans the shallow flashing stream.

Like all other small towns, whether in Devon or elsewhere, which have little to attract the ordinary visitor, and less to invite commerce, Ottery is quietest of the quiet. A conflagration which took place in 1866, when more than a hundred houses were destroyed, did not improve matters, and nowadays it is chiefly interesting for its historic associations and for the beautiful church—a cathedral in miniature. For in Mill Street dwelt for a season Sir Walter Raleigh, and it seems a pity that the townsfolk had not sufficient public spirit to preserve his abode from destruction. Cromwell once occupied the older part of Lord Coleridge's mansion (Heath Court), and Fairfax the ubiquitous made it his headquarters for a month. The Puritan soldiery were, if tradition lie not, guilty of an act as stupid as it was sacrilegious. 'Cromwell,' says Murray, 'came to Ottery for the purpose of raising men and money, but, failing in the object, gave the run of the church to his destructive followers, who decapitated a number of the old monumental figures.' What possible satisfaction the 'elect' could have derived from beheading marble effigies one fails to understand. Happily they let the church itself alone—that church so famous throughout all East Devon that common report has it that

it formed a model for Exeter Cathedral. Unfortunately for the renown of Ottery, the cathedral is of earlier date than the church. The church was formed on the cathedral, not the cathedral on the church. Bishop Warelwast, as we have already seen, began the cathedral towers in 1112; Bishop Bronescombe and Bishop Grandisson (who also had a deal to do with the cathedral) interested themselves in the erection of the smaller building one hundred and fifty to two hundred years later.

The appearance of the church—allowing, of course, for the differences in architecture—is naturally that of the cathedral in miniature. There are the two transeptal towers* (and I believe Exeter and Ottery are the only specimens of this arrangement in England), there the west front. With the exception of the Dorset aisle (added by Cicely, Countess of Dorset, about the year 1500, and which has a fine groined roof), the aisles are, like the towers, Early English; but the west end of the nave is of the Decorated period, and so are the Lady Chapel (where is a minstrels' gallery) and chancel, the latter being flanked by the Early English chapels of St. Stephen and St. Lawrence. The roofs of both nave and chancel are painted. There are some handsome bench-ends dating from the fifteenth century, and a very beautiful font of West of England and white Italian marbles, the gift of the late Mr. Beresford Hope. At the west end are large crayon drawings of St. Matthew and St. John.

The two recumbent figures on a tomb are supposed to represent Bishop Grandisson and his wife. The effigies of his brother, Sir Otho, and his spouse are separated, and repose on opposite sides of the nave. Then there is the beautiful piece of sculpture, representing the form of Lady Coleridge, of purest white marble; but I did not notice any memorial to the author of 'The Ancient Mariner,' who was a native of Ottery, though in the

* One is capped with a short spire of lead.

churchyard is a graceful cross to the memory of the less famous John Taylor Coleridge.

Inside the porch, on the left side of the door, over which are the arms of Henry VIII., is a tablet containing a bequest to the man or woman 'of exemplary life and some skill in physick' who would give their services to the poor without remuneration. The 'man or woman' must be 'very fit, or as fit as Mrs. Alford, the late Vicar's wife.' As this good lady has departed this life a good many years, tradition only can be depended upon as to her 'fitness.' It is to be hoped that her good works have not, like those of the rest of mankind, been 'writ in water,' but that there remains sufficient remembrance of them among the folk of Ottery to enable the testator's standard of excellence to be maintained.

A mile from the town across the river we shall reach Cadhay, once an Elizabethan manor-house, now a farm picturesque with ivy. Wandering past this, we cross the river once more near Fenny Bridges, and follow the high-road into Honiton.

The vale of the Otter at Honiton is wonderfully pretty. The river—a tiny stream now—flows through a rich district as fertile as any in the county, winding about the feet of many a tall green hill, rising knoll-like above its waters, and generally covered with timber. Many of them attain a considerable height. Dumpdon, for instance—more graceful in shape than in name—that round-topped hill to the north, is nearer 900 than 800 feet. Lofty, too, is Hembury, away to the left, crested with the finest Roman earthwork in Devon. In shape this earthwork is oval, and divided into two parts—the one, it is supposed, for horse, the other for foot, soldiers, and it is surrounded by a triple vallum. But the Seaton people will not allow that it is the *Moridunum* of Antoninus, claiming that honour for themselves.

The name of Honiton is known all over the world in connection with lace. Not that more is made in the town than in the villages all the way up and down the Otter Valley, where in many a cottage doorway matron and maid may be seen pillow on lap laboriously working out the delicate tracery that still—notwithstanding the cheaper machine-made bobbin net—commands a high price in the market. Without its lace, indeed, Honiton would have little title to fame. There is nothing specially interesting in its one long street; nothing, indeed, noteworthy around the town save the parish church on the hillside, which has a fine old oak screen and some extraordinary heads on the roof. Here, too, beneath black marble, lie the bones of Thomas Marwood, who died at the age of 105, physician (it almost sounds like *executioner*) to Queen Elizabeth.

And here we take leave of the Otter, which soon becomes a mere brook. Its source is not many miles from Honiton, among the spurs of the range dividing Devon from Somerset. Let us get onwards to our next river, the 'silver Axe.' Yet, though the railway will take us the few miles to Seaton at its very mouth, we shall hardly reach it to-day, for this walk up the vale of Otter has been no light work, and it will be well to rest at one of the inns and start on our next pilgrimage in the dewy freshness of morning.

I have pleasant yet rather sad recollections of a Honiton inn. Pleasant, because it was visited during one of the most delightful tours I ever took—from Mid Somerset to the Land's End; sad, because my companion, poor fellow! is no longer among us. He was a great cricketer, and fell a victim to his fondness for the game, dying from the effects of a blow given by a ball. There was a funny little old-fashioned creature who dined with us, evidently a musician of some sort, as he wore a tuning-fork suspended from his watch-chain. His blandness and

benignity were excessive; but both were rather neutralized by attempts at fine language. 'Allow me, sir,' said he, 'to assist you to some *greengrocery*.' He further informed us that when we reached Cornwall we should have 'some steep hills to *compete* with.'

The Axe first comes into view as the train leaves Colyford Station behind, and, if the tide be up, nothing in a small way can be prettier or more peaceful than the estuary, with tall Hocksdown Hill rising from the further shore and Axmouth village nestling beneath. But we shall see it all better presently, when the train reaches Seaton, that little watering-place that shares with Sidmouth and Budleigh Salterton the shoal of visitors that annually gathers to the coast between Exe and Axe. The station is close to the beach, a horrible slope of pebbles, and the first thing you see when you get there is the ancient name painted in gigantic letters all along the sea-wall—'Moridunum.' Whether it was the Moridunum of Antoninus let antiquaries agree if they can. We have already seen that Hembury, near Honiton, is one rival; while High Peak, near Sidmouth, is another. Roman coins and Roman ruins have, however, come to light at various times. There is a so-called Roman camp at Hocksdown, across the Axe; the field known as Honey-ditches is supposed to have been the site of another. But whether a Roman settlement or not, Seaton seems at one time to have been a flourishing seaport, for Leland speaks of there having been 'a very notable haven' there. Yet he could have had little but tradition to go upon, for even when he came there was already 'a mighty rigge and barre of pible stones in the very mouth of it,'* and the town was 'a meane thing inhabited with fisscharmen.' But, though small, it certainly is not a 'meane thing' now, and, if its commercial glory has departed, Seaton

* This ridge seems to have diverted the outlet of the Axe, for Leland goes on, 'and the Ryver of Ax is dryven to the very Est Point of the Haven.'

can never fail to be a place of pleasant sojourn ; while Beer Head thrusts its white bastions into the blue water on the one hand, and Axe flows onward down the green valley to its outlet at Haven Cliff on the other.

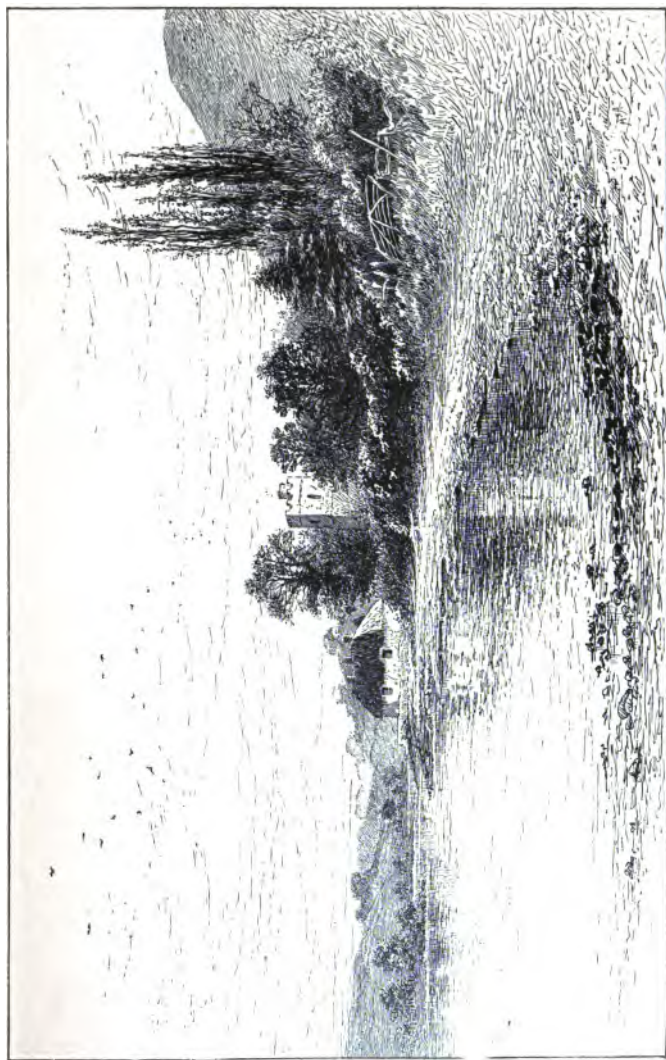
The mouth of the Axe may be almost cleared at a bound, though half a mile higher, at the top of the tide, it is a hundred yards across. This narrow opening is caused by a bank of shingle, or rather pebbles, growing, as we have seen, in Leland's day—he calls it the Chisil—but which of late years has increased so rapidly that the little harbour is no longer used, and the rough quay, with its tiny Custom-house, is falling bit by bit into the water. I can myself recollect when an occasional sloop lay beside the old weed-grown wall ; but in the days of the quaint, half-crazy itinerant, trade must have been considerable, for he speaks of Axmouth as 'an olde and bigge fischar toune.'

But it is a pleasant spot, this meeting of pent-up river with sea. High overhead rises the tall Haven Cliff—red sandstone capped with chalk. To the left the white cliffs of Beer close the western end of the bay, while towards Lyme, Culverhole Point marks its eastern limits. The colouring of these cliffs is remarkably rich.

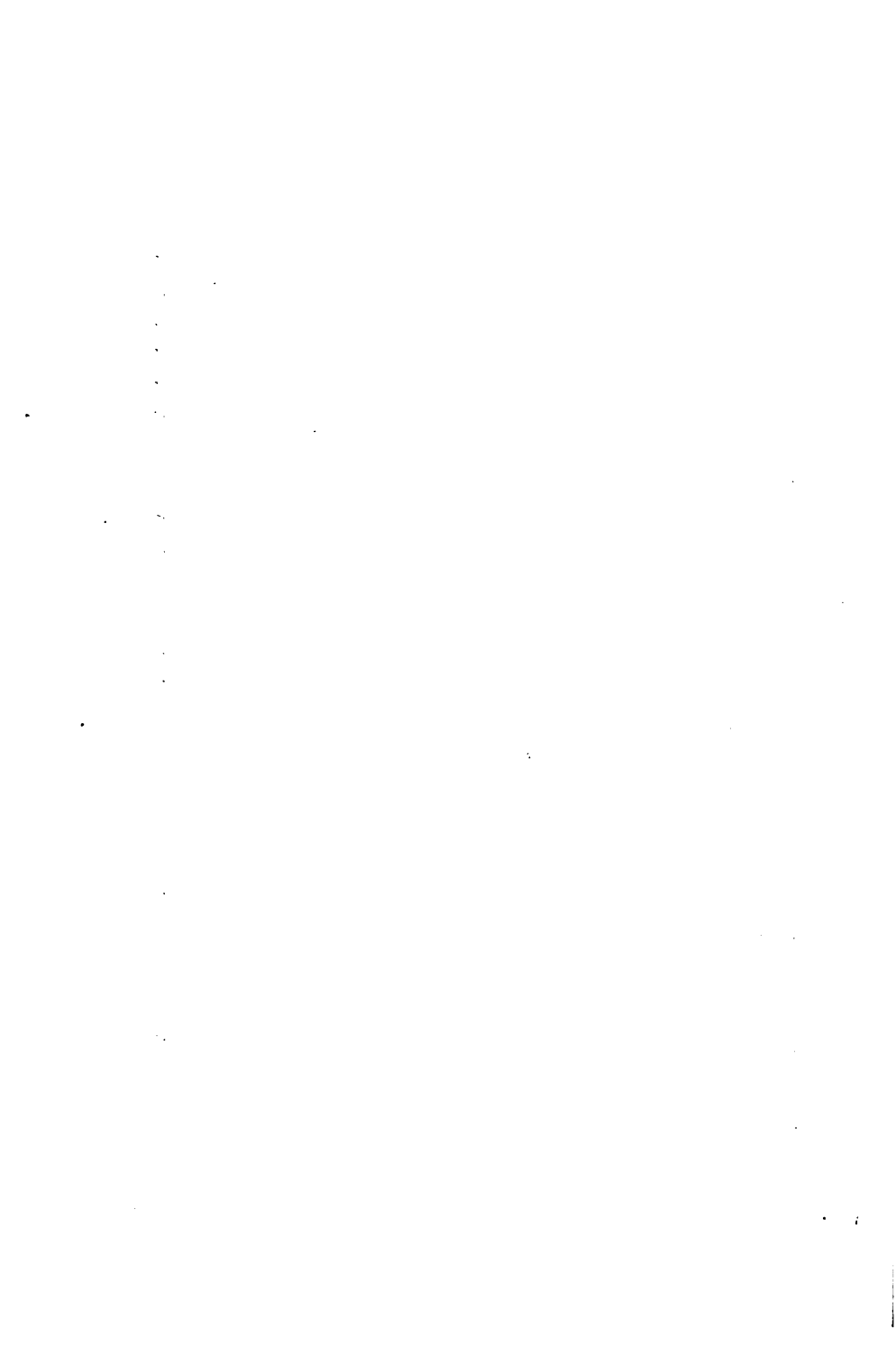
And off the river's mouth—and, for the matter of that, throughout the bay, too—is fishing *ad libitum*. Pollock, bass, conger, gurnet, mackerel, and rock whiting, are but a few of the fish yielded by the waters of Seaton Bay.

The village of Axmouth lies on the eastern shore of the estuary, a mile from this haven. No wall separates the highway from the river, and at high tides those bound for the village from Seaton must either pause upon the bridge* till the waters ebb, or scramble as best

* This bridge is a rather remarkable structure. It was built by the late Sir Walter Trevelyan, and is of concrete throughout. There are three arches. At the Seaton end stands the toll-house, also of concrete ; even the *roof* is of this material. Before the erection of the bridge passengers for Axmouth, Lyme, etc., were ferried across in an ordinary rowing-boat (I have crossed in it many



THE AXE NEAR AXMOUTH. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED, FROM A SKETCH BY K. ST. B. LEIGH.



they may along the fields. But few will grudge the forced delay, for the scene is fair enough. On a calm day the steel-like sheet of water mirrors everything with a stillness and completeness never broken save by the passing of an occasional boat. Even the hills behind Colyton find a faithful double in these placid waters, from which the stir of shipping has departed for evermore. The silence, too, is profound: beyond the occasional shout of children at play upon Seaton Beach, which comes mellowed by distance, or the rumble of an approaching train, it is as quiet on this bridge as on the top of Haven Cliff. Here, as we watch for the turn of the tide, we ruminate upon the decadence of the village round the bend of the river-covered road, and marvel whether tradition lies in saying that it once had fourteen *hotels*! It does not ring true, somehow; *imprimis*, *hotels* are modern conveniences: in the days of Axmouth's splendour (?) the hostelry or inn was the resort of the wayfarer. But that piece of seaweed that has been so long stationary is making a 'downgrade movement'; the reflections tremble; the tide, in short, has turned, and in a few minutes we may pass up the wet road, and, casting behind us 'auld wives' tales,' try and arrive at some conclusion for ourselves.

Turning up the village street, we seek for the remains of houses of wealthy traders as some guarantee of former prosperity. In vain. Not even a 'marine store' greets the inquiring eye. And where are the fourteen hotels? Alas! gone, too. The ancient hostelry has departed with the ancient mansion, and two humble inns now suffice for the wants of pretty Axmouth.

Yes, pretty it is, lying at the foot of its green hills, with elms growing half-way up the slopes, a soft, cool background to the gray church standing within a stone's

a time), while horses and vehicles were obliged to cross by the next bridge, two miles higher up the stream.

throw of the river, which ten minutes ago bore a 'counterfeit presentment' of the tower. Like everything else in Axmouth—except the new Ship Inn, from which, by the way, no ship is ever seen—this church is old; one of the oldest, indeed, in Devon. That Norman door on the north side dates, it is said, from the days of the Conqueror. The arcade within is of the same massive architecture; so are the arches of the south aisle, which we have the authority of Dr. Oliver for saying is nearly as ancient as the Conquest. The faded frescoes on the pillars and wall are as old as the days of Chaucer, that nearest the chancel representing St. Michael; the next our Lord after the resurrection, that on the wall His burial. In the chancel, which has Early English windows, is a trefoil-headed piscina, with a rose-shaped drain. The sculptured figure of the ecclesiastic, with his feet resting on an animal, is said to be that of a priest of the church, the animal representing his dog, though it is more like a lion. This priest devised land to the church on condition that his dog should be buried with him—like the wild hunters of ages prehistoric. A curious instance of how this story has taken hold of the village mind is to be found in the name of the orchard hard by. The God's Acre (for by this name it was for generations undoubtedly known) has become *Dog's Acre*. Such is the force of tradition. It is not everyone, however, who swears by the priest and his dog. One worthy rustic gives it as *his* opinion that the tomb 'be that of a retired gentleman who came to live in the country.'

The neighbourhood is interesting. On the hillside to the right of the combe, up which passes the road to Lyme, stands the farmhouse of Bindon, once the seat of the Erles. The building appears to be of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and has some good windows and a chapel, now used as a *bedroom*. *Tempora mutantur* indeed! My visit was an early one—at five a.m.—and

the farmer naturally objected to disturb the slumbers of the sweet Amaryllis who lay within, so that I saw it not. How well I remember that walk in the dewy freshness of an August morning by the side of the old labourer going to his daily toil! He had been talking about his long hours, and, by way of consolation, I remarked that his work was at least healthier than that of those shut up in shop or office. His reply was mysterious. 'Yes, sir; it be the cattle.' And then, seeing that I looked puzzled, he added, 'The shape, sir—the shape. The smell of a flock of shape be terrible strength'nin'. Cows,' he went on, 'be good; but shape be *stronger*.' I thought of the agreeable odour—a mixture of dust and oil—emanating from a flock of sheep, and devoutly hoped that no such remedy for debility would ever be prescribed for me. Yet the belief in it is very general, and a farmer in the neighbouring county of Dorset once told me that a delicate man, coming to the country for change, regularly spent the early morning hours to leeward of his sheep-fold. Poor fellow! I hope it did him good.

But they like everything of a medicinal nature *strong*, do these Western rustics. 'If doctor's stuff be *white*, it ain't no good; us likes a good brown physic, with plenty of taste in un.' I wonder how often the doctor has harmlessly deceived them by putting a little colouring matter into the *white* 'stuff'! Not that it is necessary to practise these 'pious frauds' on the countrymen only. I know of a gentleman who has quite a passion for tonics, and will not be denied. On one occasion his medical man, knowing that what his patient so insisted upon would be bad for him, sent him a bottle of *aqua pura coloured*. My unsuspecting friend fell upon the fluid, and declared after the very first dose that he 'felt stronger already.' Great is the power of faith!

High over village and river rises Hocksdown, said, when seen end on, to bear a marked resemblance to

Vesuvius. On the summit, which is flat, not pointed, are the earthworks of a camp—a rude oblong, following the shape of the hill. Some call it Celtic, some Roman. I did not measure it, nor do I intend to; for the flint-strewn enclosure, with its crop of thistles, is anything but pleasant walking. Whether in its origin British or Roman, this hill-fortress has probably at some time or other protected the legions; for at the foot of the hill near the Vicarage is the fragment of a Roman road, once leading, I suppose, to their debatable station of Moridunum. But whether you are archæologically disposed or no, you must climb to the top of Hocksdown, for it gives the best view in this district of the Axe estuary, the wide fertile valley, and the blue sea beyond. From its northern brow you look down upon Stedcombe House, a substantial mansion, successor to that burnt by the Royalists after the gallant defence by Sir Walter Vile in 1644. Beyond rises another hill-fort—that of Musbury Castle, crowning the summit of a long wooded ridge.

The valley of the Axe between Axminster and the sea is indeed full of memorials of bygone days—old villages, old churches, old manor-houses and farms, though all young indeed when compared with the ancient earthworks that rise above them. Three miles above Axmouth the village of Musbury slopes up the hillside towards the *bury* or fort to which it owes its name. In the well-kept and bright little church is a curious monument to certain members of the Drake family. Three pair of painted stone figures on their knees, each representing a married couple, are divided by the heavy-looking arches of the seventeenth century. The whole monument is strongly suggestive of the compartments or boxes not many years since so common in London restaurants. It is, of course, though interesting, ugly in the extreme.

A mile or so beyond Musbury, on the left of the highway, with the river meandering below, is Ashe, where

these Drakes once lived, but which is nowadays better known as the birthplace of John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough. It was in the stormy days of the Civil War that the future General of Queen Anne's armies first saw light. The Drakes were then at Ashe, and with them resided Sir Winston Churchill, of Minterne, in Dorset, who had married a daughter of the house. He was a strong Royalist, and therefore particularly obnoxious to the Commonwealth, and so he sought a temporary asylum beneath the roof of his father-in-law. And this is how Ashe came to be honoured as the birthplace of one who, whatever his failings, has earned, and preserved too, a reputation for strategy and courage that will always place him high in the ranks of military commanders.

Like Bindon, Ashe dates from about the fifteenth century. Like Bindon, too, it has 'seen better days.' The mansion is a farmhouse now; the chapel a cider-press—when I saw it the asylum of a pugnacious-looking ram, who had retired there to rid himself of the kind attentions of the flies, which without were making the air drowsy with their hum. Indeed, there is little left of its former glory; but interesting it always must be for its connection with the hero of Blenheim.

In connection with Ashe a funny story is told about Lord North (the man who sent out taxed tea to America), who happened to be staying at the house in the autumn of 1765. There is a Devonshire custom called 'crying the neck,' which is still, I believe, observed in some places at the close of harvest. Some ears of corn from the last load are bound into a rude shape; this one of the harvesters holds aloft, while the others, raising their hooks, shout, 'A neck! a neck! a neck! We have un.' Lord North heard the shouts, and for some reason or none thought that the labourers meant to have *him*. His fears appear to have communicated themselves to a friend, who, drawing his sword, advanced upon the astonished

reapers. Of course, the custom was at once explained and the sword returned bloodless to its scabbard.

We have long ago left the tidal waters of the Axe, which rise, indeed, little beyond the iron bridge between Axmouth and Musbury, by which dwellers on the eastern bank reach the little market town of Colyton. This is a sleepy place, a good mile from the Axe, on the Coly, which comes down the valley from the hills about Honiton. The uncommon-looking church-tower, or, rather, towers—an octagon tower rising from within a square one—is a noticeable feature in the landscape. Within the church is the strange *Choke-a-bone* monument, as it is locally called, erected to the memory of a daughter of William Courtenay and Catherine, youngest daughter of Edward IV. The effigy of the poor child, who was, it is said, choked by a fish-bone, lies under a handsome canopy sculptured with the arms of Courtenay and of England.

Some three miles from the town, between the Coly and the Axe, but nearer the former stream, is the old mansion of Shute, the home of the Pole family. Of the former house—an early Tudor mansion—there remains little beyond a fine embattled gateway. The old house has, like others, become a farm; put to a less romantic though far more peaceful use than was the case four hundred years ago, when the Bonvilles, stanch Yorkists, who then dwelt there, were for ever quarrelling with their Lancastrian neighbours, the Courtenays of Colcombe Castle, on the other side of Colyton. This mansion, too, has shared a like fate. Its sword has turned into a ploughshare.

In this neighbourhood, on Kilmington Hill, grows one of the rarest—possibly the very rarest—of our wild-flowers, the *Lobelia urens*, commonly called ‘the flower of the Axe.’ I have never seen it myself, but those who have tell me it is of a rich blue colour. Needless to

remark, its *habitat* is eagerly sought out, and Kilmington Hill is the happy hunting-ground of the botanist.

To return to the Axminster road outside the lands of Ashe. No one gazing up this beautifully fertile valley, green with the pastures, through which the river twists and turns a bright shallow stream, would imagine that it once ran with blood. Yet so say the old legends. So, too, according to some, say the place-names of Warlake, Kilmington,* and Kingsfield. Warlake, the war-brook, a runnel passing beneath the road, we presently cross, and can, if we choose, believe that here or hereabouts King Athelstan fought the battle of Brunanberg in 937, and, 'Christ helping, had the victory, and there slew five Kings and seven Earls.' It is certain, however, that the ancient name of Axminster was Branburg, though whether the story that Athelstan founded the minster there to commemorate his victory has a like foundation in fact I cannot say.

Leaving the hypothetical battle-field, we enter the town, 'slumberous,' says a guide-book, 'to a degree.' The guide-book is not far wrong. Axminster is the dullest of the dull, only waking up for a few hours on market day. As for Axminster carpets, they have no more to do with Axminster than Cheddar cheeses have to do with Cheddar; Wilton has long ago taken over the manufacture, and the unromantic tooth-brush is all that now issues from Axminster workshops.

The church is, indeed, the only object of interest in the town. Nothing of Athelstan's minster remains, the earliest piece of architecture being a Norman doorway with chevron moulding at the eastern end of the south aisle, and perhaps the piers of the tower, which, rising in the centre of the building, adds considerably to its dignity. The Early English chancel has two arched recesses, containing, so it is said, effigies of Athelstan and another

* Pulman's 'Book of the Axe.'

king in a headless condition. The church has two squints or hagioscopes and a handsomely carved seventeenth-century pulpit and reading-desk. Without subscribing to the opinion that the minster is 'barely worth a shilling as a sight,' it may be said that the best is not made of a really fine and spacious church, nor can justice be done to it till the hideous galleries are removed.

In the meadows near Axminster railway-station a few walls, mantled thick with ivy, mark the ruins of the once stately abbey of Newenham. The architecture is said to have been very similar to that of Salisbury Cathedral, but not a trace of its beautiful lines now remain. No pains whatever appear to have been taken to preserve the last beauties of Newenham, its condition being even worse than was the case some fifty years ago, when Merivale asked :

'Are yonder straggling orchard wall
And yon dark ivied window all—
All that unpitying Time has spared
Of that illustrious fabric reared,
And consecrate to Heaven above
In union of fraternal love?
And has destruction seized so soon
The saintly labours of Mohun?'

Alas! not even the 'ivied window' remains.

Not far from the ruins the Axe is spanned by Bow Bridge. This bridge is said to have acquired its name from the following tragic circumstance: There lived at Kilminster a quack named Bow, who acquired a great reputation from curing snake-bite by means of a preparation known only to himself. At all the surrounding fairs and markets this charlatan would put in an appearance, and, after allowing himself to be bitten by vipers, retire to his tent, apply the remedy, and appear before the gaping rustics sound and well. One day a boy abstracted from his pocket the antidote. Bow applied the snakes as usual, disappeared within his tent, felt for the charm. It was gone! With a shriek the terrified man fled for his

home at Kilminster, where alone was a supply of the fluid. But fast as he fled, the poison spread faster, and as he reached Bow Bridge he fell dead.*

At Axminster the Axe is a small and rather sedgy stream, certainly not worth the trouble of tracing yard by yard upward. Much may be seen from the railway, which follows its banks for miles, and, as the valley is a wide one, interferes little with the scenery. Going by railway, however, will not give the grand *coup d'œil* to be obtained by the pedestrian who follows the highroad for part of the way towards Chard. This road gradually ascends, until near Tytherleigh,† about four miles from the town, we look down upon almost the whole valley. A scene of more quiet beauty does not exist in Western England. All down the basin the line of the river may be traced winding between the long flat-topped hills, mostly wooded to their summits, and descending in graceful curves to the lower ground. Further away to the east we see the breezy Dorset downs; Lewsdon, with its crown of firs, the loftiest hill in that county; and bald Pilsdon Pen‡ crowned by its earthworks.

In the valley beneath, between Tytherleigh and Axminster, is another old house—Coaxden. Here Mistress Cogan is said to have concealed Charles II. under her hoop while her Roundhead husband joined the troopers in searching the house. It is a question who felt most uncomfortable during the search, the Prince or the lady. Charles remembered her better than he did some of those who had befriended him, and, when he reached the Continent, sent her a gold chain and locket bearing his arms.

* Pulman's 'Book of the Axe.'

† Once the home of the Tytherleighs, now a farm. The house is approached by a great Tudor archway, still bearing an escutcheon with the family arms.

‡ Cornu-British *piles*, bald; *dun*, a hill; *pen*, a head. The camp on the summit, surrounded by a double ditch, is oblong, and measures about 1,200 feet by 300 feet.

Near Coaxden there is a pretty bit of river scenery. The Axe, dammed for a mill, forms a long deep pool, known as Coaxden Range, once, says Mr. Pulman, the resort of salmon returning from spawning. It is not far beyond this—about half a mile the other side of Tytherleigh—that the county boundary is reached, and the Axe is no longer a ‘river of Devon.’

But as the Exe was commenced in Somerset, it is only fair that the Axe should be followed into Dorset, more especially as one or two of the most interesting places on its banks are in that county. No one should reach the borders of Dorset and turn back without seeing the abbey that ‘stands out *facile princeps* amongst the five Cistercian abbeys of Devon’*—the beautiful abbey of Forde.

The story of the founding of Forde Abbey is a curious one. In 1136 Richard de Brionys, Baron of Okehampton, built a monastery at Brightley, near that town, for certain Cistercians, who came all the way from Waverley, in Surrey. But the land at Brightley was barren, and the poor monks could not make both ends meet. So they set out on their return to Waverley. At Thorncombe (in which parish Forde is situated) they rested at the house of Adelia, sister of Richard, who in compassion at their distressed condition gave them lands by the Axe. Here, in 1141, they commenced to rear a goodly pile of buildings, which, though altered, and, indeed, to some extent mutilated, is, nevertheless, a pile that any county might be proud to possess.

Its unusually perfect state after all these years is due to an odd chance. The roofs were not of lead, and the Commissioners sent round by King Henry to dissolve the monasteries accordingly passed it by, the King’s grantee merely paying a sum down for materials.

* It was till recently in a detached portion of the county, but for magisterial and other purposes now lies within the confines of Dorset.

The situation is very pleasant—in a shallow valley well wooded. The Axe flows within a few yards of the back of the abbey; in front are spacious lawns and gleaming sheets of water, on the banks whereof the monks doubtless spent many a Thursday evening catching the fish for Friday's dinner. The long façade is very striking, although the part 'restored' by Inigo Jones consorts none too well with the rich tracery of the Perpendicular windows and the heavily-carved stonework of the older portion.

We enter beneath the tower built by the last Abbot, Thomas Chard, in 1528. On the east—*i.e.*, the right hand—are the remains of the cloisters, now used as a conservatory. We say the 'remains,' because, though in perfect condition, this is the only one of the four sides that originally made up the quadrangle. Curiously enough, it is built *over* the Norman walls of an earlier building, a small piece of which the present owner has exposed, showing a little arcade of pointed Norman arches, with pillars of a darker stone. The length is eighty-two feet, the whole covered by a roof, which is a fine specimen of Perpendicular vaulting. To the left of the entrance is the refectory, of the same date as the tower, and also built, or rather rebuilt, by Chard. This is a noble chamber, fifty-five feet long and twenty-eight feet high, with a carved and gilded ceiling. It is now used as the hall. Beyond, up a step or two, is the dining-room, formerly the *daïs* of the refectory. This, together with the remainder of the western part of the abbey, has been altered for domestic purposes by Inigo Jones, and the ceiling, together with that of the drawing-room adjoining, affords a fine example of his elaborate workmanship.

Beyond the cloisters is the chapter-house, now used as a private chapel: a strange jumble of Transition Norman arches, with chevron mouldings, Perpendicular windows, and seventeenth-century screen, pulpit, and other woodwork—the work, of course, of Inigo Jones. It is the

oldest part of the building, erected, no doubt, by the Brightley monks themselves. Behind it, to the north, is the crypt, with a groined roof; and over it an Early English dormitory, known as the monks' walk, and now devoted to the servants' sleeping apartments.

This overlooks a door opening on the kitchen, an apartment still used, and apparently little altered. Overhead is another refectory of Perpendicular style, which contains a curious modern screen made up of bits of old Breton bedsteads. The length of this chamber is about forty feet. From the window near the half-arch, where once upon a time

‘The reader droned from the pulpit,
Like the murmur of many bees,
The legend of good St. Guthlac
And St. Basil's homilies,’

we get a lovely peep of river and overhanging trees.

The grand staircase, completed in 1658, is another fine specimen of Inigo Jones's taste. As we ascend it, towards the saloon, the portrait of ‘poor Nelly,’* by Lely, looks down upon us. The saloon is about the same size as the Grand Refectory. It is hung with tapestry, representing the cartoons of Raphael, captured, it is said, from a Spanish galleon, and presented to Francis Gwyn by Queen Anne.† Sir Francis was Queen Anne's Secretary for War, and for her reception he prepared the magnificent bedchamber known as Queen Anne's Room. The walls of this apartment were formerly adorned with the curious tapestry representing a Welsh wedding, but that has since been removed to the corridor between the saloon and smaller refectory.

* ‘Don't let poor Nelly starve’ were the last words of Charles II. in commending Eleanor Gwynne to his brother's care.

† The great chest in which it was contained when captured may be seen on the ground-floor. For this tapestry the Empress Catherine of Russia is said to have offered the sum of £30,000! This may be; but the legend about the capture will not hold water, for the present owner of Forde, Mr. Evans, states that the work bears the Mortlake mark.

Finally, those interested in carved oak will notice in another chamber a bed of enormous dimensions, dated 1638.

Forde has had several famous abbots, among them Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1189. Nor must good Thomas Chard be forgotten. He did much towards restoring and beautifying his abbey, and it must have gone to his heart to be turned away from the dwelling-place in which he took so great a pride.

About a mile and a half distant, on the hillside to the north of the river, is the Tudor mansion of Leigh, formerly a grange of the abbey. I have not myself visited it, but understood it to be a good example of the period in which it was built, and that it has a courtyard on each side—an unusual feature.

And now we have nearly done with the Axe, which above Forde dwindles rapidly, growing 'small by degrees and beautifully less.' *Beautifully*, literally; for the upper waters of the river pass through scenes in their way no less fair than those further down the stream. For this hill-country of Dorset is no barren wilderness, but fertile enough, with wide breezy pastures, green water-meadows, and plenty of timber, except where here and there the chalk downs rise high above the tree-tops.

There is Winsham, with its ancient church, built of the flints which liberally—too liberally—are scattered about Dorsetshire. It has an Early English chancel, more or less spoilt by a miserable modern east window, far inferior to the little Decorated window that lights the west end. The remainder of the building is now mainly Perpendicular, and there is a finely-carved screen and bench-ends. Higher up, again, is Wayford, with a plain but ancient little church dating from the thirteenth century, and then the villages of Seaborough and Mosterton, where Axe passes under the highroad from Bridport to Crewkerne—a mere brook sliding over gravelly shallows,

'With here and there a speckled trout,
And here and there a grayling,

till the tangled copse above Axknoller Farm is reached,
where amid a very profusion of meadowsweet it takes
its birth. Here in this fold in the hills—in a spot which
it is difficult to get at, so thick is the vegetation—the Axe
is born. Here all day long it

'Singeth a quiet tune,'

the only note upon the clear air ; for no village is near,
and the tinkle of the bell borne by the wether upon the
hill above is too distant to prove a rival.

CHAPTER V

THE TEIGN.

The Country about Teign Head—Teign Head Bridge—Antiquities—The Tolmen—The Rock Basin—View from Kestor—Gidleigh Park—Legend of Fernworthy—Gidleigh—Chagford Bridge—Chagford—James Perrot, 'the Dartmoor Guide'—The 'Spinsters' Rock'—The Logan Stone—Fingle Bridge and its Hill Forts—Clifford Bridge and Steps Bridge—Dunsford—Sir Francis Fulford and Fairfax—Christow—Decadence of the 'Revel'—Ashton—Cannonteign—Chudleigh Rock—Chudleigh—Ugbrooke Park, Neighbourhood of Chudleigh—Kingsteignton—Newton—Ford House—Bradley—Wolborough Church—Combe Teignhead—The Teign Estuary—Teignmouth—The Parson and Clerk—Embarking under Difficulties.

'From his copious fount
Swift rolls the Teign—at first, a moorland course
He solitary leads, but journeys soon
A beauteous stream by hills sublime that lift
Their leafage to the cloud.'

CARRINGTON.

IN the south-western corner of this England of ours, dull as it may seem, from a commercial point of view, to the busy citizen from the 'centre of civilization,' monotony of scenery is unknown. Here we have no interminable levels, no marshy fens, reaching away to the sky-line, as is the case, I am told, in the eastern counties; every mile discloses a different prospect—scarcely two fields are alike. Even the flat turbaries of Somerset are ringed with hills—the limestone range of Mendip, the green slopes of Polden, and further away the ferny steeps of Quantock; but Devonshire is different to this. The Briton did not

call this land Dyvneint for nothing. For him, as for us, this most beautiful of Western counties possessed features which gave, and give it still, a title to the romantic and picturesque which no other county can in equal measure boast. And into this land of the deep valleys* we now take our way, recommencing our wanderings on Dartmoor, whence Teign, coming down from his 'copious fount,' plunges into the gorges of Gidleigh and Fingle.

It is a far cry from Axe to Teign; and you get into quite another country. Except that both rivers rise on high ground, there is nothing in common between them. Scenery, geology, cultivation, are as different as possible; for the soft green hills of Dorset, its downs of chalk and greensand, its fertile pastures, you have a wild desert of granite, with no pastures at all, save where here and there on the borderland the moor-farmer has with infinite pains stubbed up heather and furze, and surrounded with a loose wall—of granite also—a croft torn, as it were, from the reluctant earth—earth upon which his prosperous brother about Cheddington or Beaminster would look with scorn. The very currents of the rivers differ. Even after rain the voice of the Dorset-born stream scarcely rises beyond a loud murmur, as if vexed that its quiet life should be disturbed. But the Teign speaks in far other tones. His ire once roused, he shouts in tones of thunder, casting himself in impotent fury against the great boulders that strew his channel.

Nowadays you reach most things by means of a railway; and far from man as is Teign Head, you can get to it, or nearly so, behind the iron horse, though a horse of flesh is a necessary supplement after you leave the terminus at Moretonhampstead. Thence you may drive by a fair road up to and over the moor to the solitary little inn above Vitifer Tin Mine, and from this point the springs of the Teign are but some four miles distant.

* Dyvneint signifies 'deep valleys.'

But to drive thither is impossible, nor do I advise you to ride even, unless you know the country well; for there are such things as bogs on Dartmoor, and your steed may find stables of a kind that neither he nor you will appreciate. The river has two heads, those of the North and South Teign. The latter rises in a valley on the other side of the ridge, and below the pair of ruined sacred circles known as Grey Wethers, much nearer civilization (though still in a situation lonely enough) than the greater stream which oozes from the boggy uplands at the back of Siddaford Tor. This is a desolate spot indeed. Bogs are everywhere: the reservoirs not only of the Teign, but of the greatest of the rivers that rise in this dusky and unutterably dreary heart of the moorlands—the Dart.

Quickly the river gathers volume, and by the time it has left Siddaford Tor well behind has earned for itself the dignity of a bridge—a primitive affair, certainly, consisting of slabs of granite laid on rude piers built of boulders of the same stone. These *clapper* bridges, as they are called, are a feature of Dartmoor, and some are of unknown antiquity; but the first bridge on the Teign can boast no great age—it dates, indeed, from the last century, and I believe that the grandson of the builder is still living. Over it the roughest of moorland roads passes upward to a lonely farm on the hillside, tenanted by a Scotch shepherd and his family, who, especially in winter, must have a lively time of it.

If it had but a human voice, what tales this river could tell! We should then know what we may never know now—who built the circle on Scorhill, the Stonehenge of Devon, and for what purpose were set up those mysterious avenues of upright stones stretching along the sides of Shuffle Down. For this desolate land once teemed with life, and the great rock on Kestor cast its shadow over no mean settlement of aboriginal Britons. Their hut base-

ments still cover the slopes with rings of massive blocks ; their cattle-pounds yet remain to bear witness to the days when wolves haunted the hills ; but their inhabitants are gone, buried beneath the barrow on the cloudy hill-top, or deposited, a mere handful of gray ashes, long since returned to Mother Earth, below the stony cairn.

It could have told us, too, something about that strange object the tolmen, a great boulder in the bed of the river pierced with a large and perfectly smooth hole—whether it did or did not receive through the hole afore-said the body of some credulous Celt, at the bidding of the Druid priest more ready than Naaman the Syrian to wash and be clean. Alas ! we live in an infidel age. Druidism—whereof there is much that is imaginary and little that is real—goes down before science. The geologist has stood upon the spot that in the eyes of a few is still hallowed to white-robed priests, and pronounced the tolmen a gigantic ‘pot-hole.’ He points to other rocks in the river-bed, this irreverent dissipater of sacred mysteries, and shows where a pebble deposited by a freshet has made unto itself a little pit* that deepens, though imperceptibly, year by year, till the pebble comes to nothing and another takes its place. Granted, says he, that a very big pebble ground out the hole through the tolmen—you can crawl through it completely—still, it is a pot-hole, and nothing more. What a terrible thing is this science ! A pity for the poor tolmen, stripped thus of its fictitious sanctity, creeps over one, increased by the respect which age, even when contemned, exacts, for this tolmen must be unknown æons old.

Notwithstanding the geologist’s fine contempt for its sacred attributes, the tolmen has been photographed over

* I have myself seen these pot-holes in process of formation. I remember one particularly in the East Ockment, near Okehampton, which is some inches deep, and has a hard, smooth pebble at the bottom, which works round whenever—which is pretty often—a flood comes down the river.

and over again, and its counterfeit presentment may be seen in the Chagford shop-windows, as well as sundry indifferent ones of Scorhill Circle, and the immense granite slab that bridges the Wallabrook close to where it joins the Teign. They would photograph the rock basin on Kestor, too, these men of the camera, could they 'make a picture of it,' but this they cannot well do.

About this, too, our geologist has much to say. Artificially made for Druidical libations or sacrifices! He scorns the idea, and insists that this, the largest rock basin on the moor, owes its existence merely to the elements—the rain, the heat, the frost, which, each in its turn, assisted nobly by the wind, has worked away the softer constituent parts of the granite. But as the basin has a diameter of eight feet, and a depth of two and a half, it must have taken as long to form as the pot-hole in the river below.

From the top of Kestor there is a fine view of this part of Dartmoor. The Teign—though only seen when close at hand, as it flows on the other side of Shuffle Down—can be traced almost from its source, four miles away in the heart of the moor, to the tolmen, where it bids the desert farewell. There, in the distance, rising over Long Ridge, is Siddaford Tor, the logan on its summit 1,764 feet above sea-level; and nearer, across the wide marshy valley between the Teign and Wallabrook the odd-looking rocks of Watern Tor, which are only some eight feet lower. Away to the north the downs roll up, wave after wave, each higher than the last, to Cosdon, one of the highest *hills* (as distinct from *tors*) on the whole moor, falling short but by one foot of 1,800 feet. It is a wild and rather dreary scene, in strong contrast to the panorama eastward. For, by merely turning round, you look down upon the fertile and very lovely country about Chagford—upon the valley many hundred feet below, through which the impetuous river hastens towards the pass of Fingle,

where an isolated piece of the moor crops up for the last time in the tors on the slope of Piddleton Down.

* * * * *

Leaving the tolmen, the Teign plunges into the wooded gorge below Gidleigh. Even in the hottest summer weather this gorge is full of sound, for the river not only descends from the moor very abruptly, but its channel is full of boulders, the larger doubtless rolled from the heights above, the smaller, in great part, brought down from the moor in freshets. Against these the river chafes perpetually, and in still weather its protest may be heard not only in the old house of Gidleigh Park up on the hillside above, but even in Gidleigh village, a good mile away. There are many pleasant spots beneath this park—certainly not a park in the general acceptation of the word,* for it is rough and rocky—one of the most delightful is at Leigh Bridge, where the South Teign comes down from Fernworthy Farm and the hut-circles about Metheril to swell the flood. Another pretty picture is at Holy Street Mill, a tumble-down but picturesque structure further down the stream which has been painted times without number.

I have referred to Fernworthy. It is a very ancient house, though with little of the picturesque about it, on the very confines of the moor, or, rather, on the side of a valley reaching far into it. Remote, lonely, the silence of the moorland enwrapping it from year's end to year's end, it is the very place for superstition, and to it superstition still clings, though the legend of the building of Fernworthy is three centuries old. Over the door is the date 1590, the year in which it was built on the site of a still older dwelling in which the same family had lived time out of mind. The most graceful of Devonshire

* Here, as elsewhere, the term must be the Celtic *parc*, which simply means an enclosure.

writers* can tell the story better than I, so let him, though now gone to his rest, relate it: 'An older house had been inhabited by the same family for many centuries. After the new one was built and duly finished, the continuance of the race seemed to be promised by the birth of a son, for which the franklin and his wife had long been hoping in vain. But other creatures had also been hoping, and now watched their opportunity. On a winter evening, when the light had nearly faded, and the turf-fire had fallen low, the mother slept for a moment instead of keeping watch over her child in the cradle. As she woke she heard a strange low laugh, and thought she saw the flutter of a gray cloak. But the child was gone. The earthmen had bided their time, and the letters "T. W." above the new doorway remain, the initials of the last of a long-descended race. The house, it was thought, had been built of granite from some rock under the special protection of the hill-folk, and the first human being born in it had thus fallen into their power.'

I had almost forgotten Gidleigh. By all means get up to it if you can, for here are church, manor-house, and ruin of thirteenth-century castle almost touching one another—an old-world group. Of the latter there is little remaining; the manor-house, too, is empty, and fast lapsing to decay; but the church, which has a painted screen, is as sturdy a little granite fabric as you will see around Dartmoor. The village is a curiosity. There are only about three cottages visible, the rest consists of scattered farms. Probably there are not a score of houses in the whole parish.

Down to the river again. Abreast of Chagford is a good stone bridge—a typical bridge, a bridge that we shall see repeated many times on this Teign, Dart, and other mountain-born streams. As a rule, they are of two or three arches, with massive piers wedge-shaped up

* R. J. King: *vide* 'A Devonshire Trout-Stream,' *Standard*, July 20, 1874.

stream, the better to fling aside the coffee-coloured flood-water. Now, granite, of which this bridge is composed, is rough, and with age gets rougher. Very soon the seeds of the smaller ferns find their way into the inequalities of the stone, which, in a state of almost perpetual moisture, afford them a climate such as they love; the roots work into the mortar or cling to débris of vegetable matter lodged, Heaven knows how, here and there, and in a few years, behold! tufts of tiny and delicate green fronds relieve the cold gray masonry. Then moss begins to form, while at the same time a spray of ivy that has long been in search of a substantial friend to cling to lays hold of a pier, and soon covers half the structure with its glossy leaves. This is why these bridges are so picturesque, and of course the older they are the more beautiful they become; in short, it is hardly too much to say that, what with vegetation and the stains of two or three centuries, the prevailing tint of the bridge over a Dartmoor river is no longer gray; indeed, it is not easy to fix on a prevailing tint at all, what with ivy, fern, moss, and the orange, black, and silvery lichens that are never so bright as when spreading over the granite.

Chagford Bridge has three arches. If my memory serve me—for I have not been over it for some years—it is not so garnished with vegetation as many of the others. I do not know whether it is the same bridge as that mentioned by Leland; possibly not, though I think there is little doubt that the foundations are those of the older structure. The road that passes over it leads to Gidleigh and Throwleigh, and on into the highroad from Exeter to Okehampton, and the walk from Chagford to the latter town, bounded, as it is, on the one hand by fertility, on the other by a grand barrenness, is one that may be taken more than once or twice without monotony.

Below Chagford Bridge the river puts on for awhile milder manners, flowing for a mile or so through pleasant

pastures, sloping gently upwards towards the villagetown. Of *Chaggiford*, as the people call it, I shall not say much; I have described it elsewhere.* Most people know it by this time, and the inn of the Three Crowns, with the deep porch where Sidney Godolphin was (it is said) slain in the 'war time' during a skirmish between the Roundheads quartered at Chagford, and the Royalist forces under Sir John Berkeley, *en route* for Okehampton. Most people, too, know the gray church standing out so boldly, as the town is approached, against the dark hills.

At Chagford you come upon civilization rather suddenly. Upon civilization in the form of 'blazers' of every hue; in the form of flannels and of tweeds, with those checks—through which you may jump—where-with the male biped likes to accentuate the fact that he is holiday-making. You will meet ladies who for the nonce have cast aside the trappings of society and are revelling in the shortest of skirts, and—very often—the nattiest of gaiters, who affect caps 'peaked fore and aft,' as a sailor once described them, and cannot walk a mile from their lodgings without a six-foot alpenstock. And you will meet anglers of every shape and size and pattern, for the Teign is a notable trout stream, as good Master Perrot will tell you if you look in at the little shop where 'the Dartmoor Guide' is always ready to advise the ambitious tourist. James Perrot is approaching four-score, but he is, or was when I saw him last, 'as hard as nails.' Nothing pleases him more than to discourse on matters pedestrian or piscatorial; he knows Dartmoor from Tavy Cleave to Gidleigh Common, from Princetown to Okehampton Park, and every likely 'stickle' in the Teign from Siddaford Tor to Clifford Bridge. He can remember the time when Chagford, that now glories in a 'bus to and from Moretonhampstead Station, besides divers flies, had no wheeled conveyance whatever, and Joan, if she

* *Vide* 'An Exploration of Dartmoor and its Antiquities.'

would go to market, must mount behind Darby, and jog thither at the rate of four or five miles an hour. Horses have lighter work nowadays.

There is a big cromlech, or dolmen, near Chagford, the only one left standing in Devon, and even this toppled over not so long ago and had to be 'restored.' This 'Spinsters' Rock,' as it is called, stands on the top of the hill across the river on the way to Drewsteignton village, and should by all means be visited. I cannot say as much for the 'modern antique' tower called Rushford Castle, which rises above the woods on the same side of the stream, though perhaps it *does* add a point of interest to the scenery.

Below Rushford Bridge the river begins to get noisy again, and once more rushes into a gorge. This gorge—it is usually known as the Fingle Valley—is the finest thing on the Teign. A bit of Dartmoor that seems to have got adrift rises precipitous on the left bank. From it the piles of Sharpitor and Huntstor rear their gray heads 300 feet above the flashing stream. On the other side the boulders and oak-trees of Whyddon Park, in which stands a fine old Jacobean mansion, cover a slope both less precipitous and less barren. In the river-bed, right under the first of the tors, is an enormous logan, four times as big as the tolmen, and quite as 'Druidical.' For the logan, we are told, was another piece of priestly machinery.

'To wondering crowds
And ignorant, with guileful hand he rock'd
The yielding logan. Practis'd to deceive,
Himself deceiv'd, he sway'd the fear-struck throng
By craftiest stratagems.'

It would require a stout priest to stir it now. To my pressure—ably assisted by a fellow-traveller—it was barely responsive. But, then, we were not Druids.

Presently Fingle Bridge is reached, four miles from Chagford. Here the valley, or rather ravine, is seen at its greatest beauty. Hill folds into hill in almost regular

sequence, covered even to the edge of the river with coppice of oak. Squeezed in between two of the loftiest is the ancient bridge, so narrow that only one cart at a time can pass over it, and the wayfarer caught thereby must retire into one of the triangular recesses, the continuation upwards of the sharp buttresses that divide the hurrying waters. A sweet spot, though somewhat sad toward eventide, when the 'cry' of the river sounds mournful on the darkening atmosphere.

But there are other things than scenery—though that is the chief attraction—to tempt one to Fingle Bridge. Right over it rises the massive shape of Prestonbury, with a declivity that none but a sheep or a schoolboy would venture to climb, for it is as nearly a cliff as may be, and is strewn with *screes* and bristling with gorse-bushes. On the top are the remains of an earthwork, facing similar though more extensive remains on the Down above the woods that rise from the opposite shore. And these 'the last and best historian of Imperial Rome' is disposed to regard as having witnessed the final struggles between the Roman and Damnonian.* Whether Merivale is right in his surmise is pure matter of conjecture; but, as the writer above quoted adds, 'the scene is at any rate picturesque enough for the last act of the drama; and the antiquary, as he traces the strong lines of Wooston, or struggles upwards to the watch-tower of Prestonbury, may please himself with the conjecture that it was during the attack on one of these fortresses that the life of Vespasian was saved by his son Titus, then a novice in arms. The incident occurred, at all events, during this Western campaign.'

The camp of Wooston is not the one to which I have referred as opposite Prestonbury; the allusion was to Cranbrook Castle, to which a terrific hill (notwithstanding its zigzag) leads from the bridge. Wooston, however, is

* R. J. King, *Quarterly Review*, April, 1859.

near at hand, on the same side of the river, and the antiquary may reach it by following the same road, and, resting on the grassy vallum, dream of Titus and Vespasian to his heart's content.

At the same time he, and we, too—for it is hard work pushing through the thickets below Fingle Bridge—must adopt this road in order to reach Clifford Bridge, a mile or so beyond the lower end of the glen. Here the hills slope back, and the valley is wider, though again but for a while. Looking up, you can see the dark declivities about Prestonbury; looking down, there is another narrow valley picturesque enough, though lacking the grand lines of that from which we have just come.

For the next two miles—*Devonshire* miles, look you—there is a choice of routes. You may take the path below Lake Farm on the right of the river, or follow the Dunsford Road along the left bank, passing into a like path opposite the angle, where the road, turning abruptly, ascends a steep hill. On either hand the hills arise, clad with woodland, save here and there where a patch of heather or bracken brings to mind the fact that the moorlands are not far off. Occasionally an outcrop of gray rock is a reminder still more forcible, and prevents any suspicion of tameness. The pathway reaches the high-road from Moreton to Exeter at Steps Bridge, above which the waters of the Teign, dammed by a weir, form a long, deep pool.

Now we get on the highroad, and in a few minutes the church and village of Dunsford show up on the left. There is nothing of special interest about this rather remote willage, with the exception of a monument to the Fulfords in the church. The Fulfords are an old Devonshire family, and their seat of Great Fulford lies over the hill four miles from Dunsford. It is a fine old mansion celebrated for its avenue, for a tradition that King Charles I. slept there when he was with his army in the

West, and for the fact that it was taken by Fairfax. The Fulford of that day (Sir Francis) was, though the staunchest of Royalists, held in such esteem by his enemies that the Parliamentary General afterwards granted him a pass addressed 'To all officers and soldiers under my command,' and running as follows: 'These are to require you, on sight hereof, to forbear to prejudice Sir F. Fulford, of Fulford, in the county of Devon, either by plundering his house there, or at Toller, or Whitchurch, in the county of Dorset, or rifling his goods, in taking away any of his horses, sheep, or any other cattle whatsoever, or doing any violence to his person or family, you and every of you will answer the contrary at your peril; and you are likewise to permit and suffer him, with his two servants and three horses, arms, and necessaries, to pass the guards to Devon and Dorset, and from time to time pass in the said counties about his lawful affairs, without let or interruption. Given under my hand and seal, this 16th of March, at Truro, 1645-6.—T. FAIRFAX.'

And now the valley widens, assuming a more pastoral air as we cross Dunsford Bridge, whence the road follows the right bank of the river all the way to Chudleigh Bridge. There is no longer boldness in the scenery, the sloping hills are marked out into green fields, with here and there darker patches of timber, over which—for it is once more in sight—Lord Haldon's tower stands out boldly against the sky.*

Three miles below Dunsford Bridge the rambling village of Christow stretches along the hillside. I have always thought that the *name* of this village went to form the title of Mr. Blackmore's fine Dartmoor romance, 'Christowell.' The *scene* of the story is a mixture of Christow and Widecombe-in-the-Moor. Christow is a pretty place,

* This tower no longer, I believe, belongs to Lord Haldon, the estate having been recently sold.

and the church is worth looking at. It is, as usual, of the Perpendicular type, and dignified with two screens, one separating the nave from the chancel, the other beneath the tower arch. The former is perhaps a shade too gorgeous in its colouring of crimson and yellow, blue and green. Some of the bench-ends are carved. The font appears to be Norman. There are numerous monuments to the Pellews, the most interesting being to Edward, Viscount Exmouth, who died in 1838. Beneath a long inscription are the following 'lines written to commemorate Lord Exmouth's humane and magnanimous conduct when, at the imminent risk of his life, he rescued (under the blessing of divine Providence) near five hundred souls, men, women and children, many of whom were sick, from the wreck of the *Dutton*, East Indiaman, in a tremendous storm, Jan. 26, 1796.'

I.

'While o'er the reeling wreck the savage storm
Poured all its lightnings, thunders, blasts, and hail,
And every horror in its wildest form
Smote the firm heart that never knew to fail,

II.

''Twas thine, Pellew, sublimely great and good,
For man, thy brother man distress'd, to dare
The deathful passage of the raging flood,
And join the frantic children of despair.

III.

'There, it was thine in comfort's balmy tone
To soothe their sorrows 'mid the tempest's roar,
To hush the mother's shriek, the sick man's groan,
And bear the sufferers trembling to the shore.

IV.

'So, when this mighty orb in dread alarm
Shall crash in ruins at its God's decree,
May thy Redeemer, with triumphant arm,
From the vast wreck of all things rescue thee.'

Over the monument hangs the flag flown by the gallant Admiral at the battle of Algiers in 1816.

The dulness of life in these far-away hamlets must be something appalling—at least, so it seems to us; but I suppose the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb, and the mind agricultural may yearn for nothing livelier. Yet I fancy there must be many a rustic not too stiff to tread a measure who looks back with a sigh of regret to the past glories of the ‘revel,’ or village fair, when there was dancing on the green and boxing in the booth, when he made Mary Ann’s homely face glow with the gift of a ‘fairing’ and, I am afraid, sometimes his own with more cider than was good for him. The only really objectionable part of the business, the drink, he can still get—at the nearest ‘public’—but somehow the fun and frolic of the ‘revel’ are gone, or going. Perhaps it is owing to the drifting of the younger members of the village community townwards, perhaps to the introduction of the railway, which, by means of cheap market tickets and other facilities, has put an extinguisher on the trade that used to be done at these fairs; but they are no longer the festivals they were of yore. Why, when Dunsford, and Britford, and Christow, and Trusham, and Ashton, each had its ‘fair day,’ there was something to look forward to all the year through. Now Newton races and such-like functions—of the town, towny—have taken the place of a cheery old English institution. A little harm perhaps came of them, but there was more fun—healthy, harmless fun, which served to cheer the dull life of Colin and Chloe for many a day.

And now the only amusement that comes their way is some small travelling show—and this only condescends to notice the larger villages—and that amusing rascal the ‘Cheap Jack,’ or, as the natives call him, ‘Cheap *John*.’ They love ‘John,’ not so much for the doubtful cheapness of his wares, as for his jocularities, his coarse wit, always—though no doubt learnt beforehand—carefully selected to suit the style of his audience, and his power

of repartee whereby he covers with confusion the rustic Joe Miller who ventures to try conclusions with him. 'Who are *you*?' I once heard him ask a lame man who had interrupted his peroration. Then with withering scorn, and fixing his eye on the rash one, he answered the question himself: 'I know who *you* are; your father keeps a little farm out on the 'ills 'ere—*two tom cats and a billy-goat, and the parish pays the rent!*' There was a roar of laughter, under cover of which the unfortunate limped slowly into the background, while the 'auctioneer,' as he delights to describe himself, went on unmoved.

A mile further and we cross the river to Ashton Station, on its very bank. Ashton is the terminus for passengers on that ridiculous little branch line which has been said—and truly—to begin on a heath and end in a field. Curiously enough, its starting-point—from another little branch line leading from Newton to Moretonhampstead—is at a place bearing a name made up of both these words—*Heathfield*. Above Ashton it is only open for goods-traffic, and to the 'field' farmers bring their produce and receive the merchandise of the outer world.

There is a charming walk uphill to Ashton Church, lying high on the slope of a valley opening on to that of the Teign. When you reach the school-house there is a bit of a climb to this church, for it is well above the road, on a sort of knoll, behind a little grove of fir-trees, and the steps to the lych-gate are steep. The exterior of the building is defaced with stucco, and is less interesting than the interior, which has a fine screen stretching right across the church, the lower part painted with quaint figures of saints. Another parclose screen divides the chancel from the north aisle. This has similar figures, but of a larger size. The bench-ends are carved. It struck me that the whole building would be the better for a judicious quantum of that restoration by some people so despised. It is really a fine building, and on

a fine site, for through the fir-trees there is a beautiful view down the combe into the Teign Valley.

On to Chudleigh Bridge the scenery of this valley, though pleasing enough, is far from romantic. The road still follows the river, passing within a short distance of Cannonteign, an old manor-house built in the days of Queen Bess. It is an historical house, too, having withstood a siege during the Civil War, when the Royalists held it against the Roundheads. But, like many another Western mansion, it succumbed to the energy of Fairfax, who took it by storm in the winter of 1645. It was once the dwelling of the Pellews, and is still the property of Lord Exmouth, but the family no longer reside there, and it has become a farm-house.

The Teign is a river that increases but slowly in volume, probably owing to the few tributaries along its upper waters. At Chudleigh Bridge it seems very little larger than it was at Dunsford. But the channel is still rocky, the water still clear, though the country gets richer and more populous at every step. We cross the bridge spanning it at some height above the flood, and climb to Chudleigh Rock, a great mass of limestone, thickly and beautifully wooded. From the summit is a very extensive prospect; on one side the little town, on another the heights of Dartmoor, and, across the glen, a well-timbered ridge dividing us from Lord Clifford's seat of Ugbrooke. This glen, a gorge in the limestone, is one of the loveliest spots in all Devon. A little stream which joins the Teign further down tumbles in a succession of cascades over a staircase of gigantic boulders. The precipice is covered thick with ferns kept ever green by the water dripping from the height above.

Between this stream and the summit is the Pixies' Hole, a cave, or rather fissure, in the limestone. The principal object in it is the Devil's Pincushion, or Pope's Head—the alternative name is not very flattering to his

Holiness—a soft mass of rock into which both credulous—if any there now be—and incredulous tourists delight in sticking a pin as a propitiatory offering to the elfin inhabitants. Chudleigh Cavern, another cave on the opposite side of the rock, they do not appear to favour.

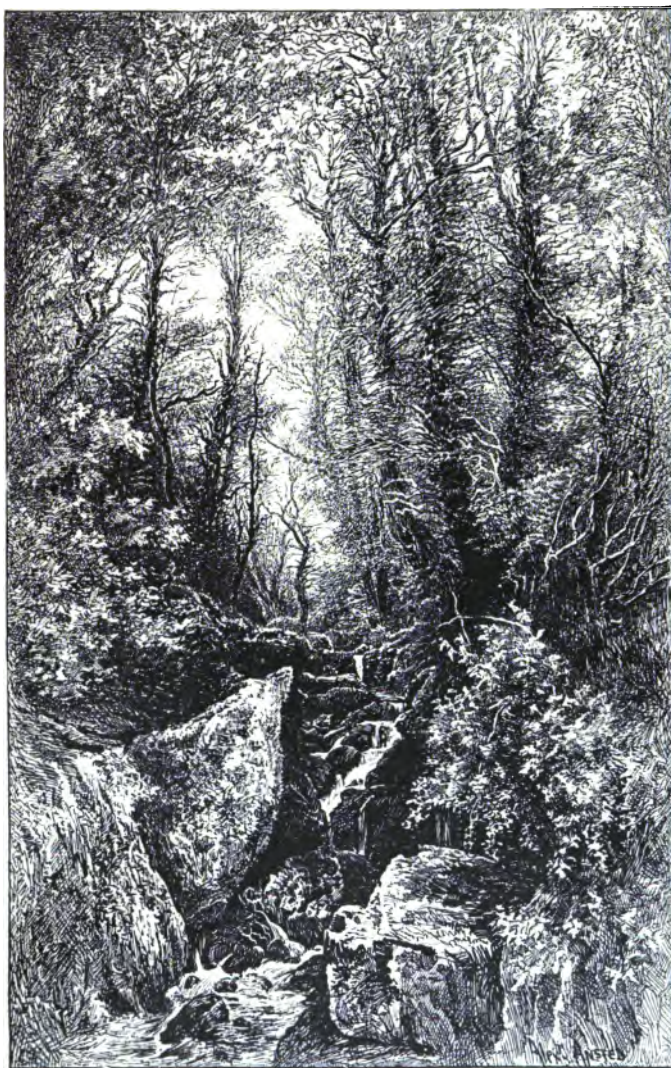
But the pixies have not always been the only inhabitants of these fissures. Man, prehistoric and barbarous to a degree, has dwelt there, for pottery, charcoal and flint implements have been found therein.

In an orchard near the cavern are a few fragments of ruined wall, the remnants of the Bishop's palace, built in the twelfth century, and rebuilt, according to Dr. Oliver, by Bishop Grandisson in the fourteenth. It must not be imagined that Chudleigh was ever the seat of a bishopric, but most, if not all, of the town was at one time the property of the See of Exeter.

Chudleigh is hardly an interesting place. It is not only small, but it is insignificant, though that is rather its misfortune than its fault. In 1807 a large portion was destroyed by fire. Then came the railway, which took away most of the traffic formerly passing through the town, which, owing to its position on the highroad from Exeter, was considerable. Consequently Chudleigh is the quietest of the quiet, and, were it not for its rock, Ugbrooke Park, and the varied scenery between it and Dartmoor, would be visited by few.

The church is more ancient than it looks—somehow these limestone churches never do look old—the low, rather squat tower dating from the thirteenth century. The chancel is about a hundred years later, but the nave is principally Perpendicular, very bad Perpendicular, too, some of the windows being as debased as they well can be. A fine oak screen, its panels filled with portraits of Apostles and prophets, separates it from the chancel.

Ugbrooke Park has some noble timber, but owes a deal of its beauty to the Ug brook, which flows through the



CHUDLEIGH GLEN. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED.



grounds, expanding at one point into a lake. The house, built in the last century, contains some fine paintings. In the grounds one of the most interesting objects to a good Catholic is the tree planted by Cardinal Wiseman, while the antiquary will delight in visiting the earthwork called Castle Dyke, and determining the vexed question whether it is British or Danish.

About Chudleigh there is much delightful scenery, particularly towards Dartmoor. There is a fine walk, for instance, to Bovey Tracey, over a hilly but fertile country, past the village of Hennock and Bottor, a trap rock commanding fine views of the valley beneath and of the barren slopes of Dartmoor westward. This valley is watered by the Teign's principal tributary, the Wrey, the upper waters of which pass through some wild border scenery. There is, for instance, the glen below Lustleigh Cleave, a bold ridge crested with rocky piles rising above a sea of bracken; and there is Lustleigh itself, as pretty a village as you will find; and further up again, at the head of the cleave, Manaton lying beneath its gray tor, and North Bovey, with its massive and ancient village cross. But this is wandering somewhat far from the Teign.

Below Chudleigh Bridge the Teign flows through scenery that will bear no comparison with that through which we have lately wandered, and as we approach Newton the hills leave it altogether. Beautiful glimpses are, however, caught of the moor, Rippon Tor looking particularly majestic. Across the meadows the wooden spire of Teigngrace, an unusual feature in the village churches of these parts, rises above the trees. Then Newton comes into view, the upper houses dotted over round, knoll-like hills. Two miles before reaching it we pass Kingsteignton, a large village with a good but not very interesting Perpendicular church. The new lych-gate has the very uncommon feature of an arch filled in with wooden tracery, like the central arch of a screen.

Within the church is a curious epitaph on a former vicar.

'Richardus Adlam hujus ecclesiæ vicarius obit Feb. 10, 1670.

Apostrophe ad Mortem.

*Damn'd tyrant ! can't profaner blood suffice ?
Must Priests that offer be the sacrifice ?
Go tell the Genii that in Hades lye
Thy triumphs o'er this Sacred Calvary,
Till some just Nemesis avenge our cause,
And force this kill-priest to revere god laws.'*

Newton—under which name the two townships of Newton Abbot and Newton Bushel are now known—is an instance of what a railway can do, even in slow-moving England. The Great Western has made Newton, and the population has increased by leaps and bounds, till a once insignificant town has become an important centre. On the historian, however, it has other claims to notice, for at the stone in Wolborough Street, as duly there recorded, William of Orange was first proclaimed King of England, and made his famous Declaration. Then there is Ford House, where the 'Deliverer' slept a night on his way to Exeter, and where his wife's grandfather, King Charles, also lay sixty-three years before. Indeed, this old Tudor mansion saw as much fighting in the 'war-time,' as Devonshire people still call it, as any house in the West. Thrice was it taken by Royalists, thrice by Roundheads. Finally it fell before Fairfax and Waller. It lies close to the town, near where the road to Torquay begins to ascend to Milber Down and its Roman camp.

Half a mile on the other side of the town are the remains of another interesting house, that of Bradley, a fortified manor-house with a chapel of the fourteenth century. It lies in a beautiful vale watered by the Bradley Brook, the last tributary of the Teign ere it reaches its estuary.

Newton is in the parishes of Wolborough and High Wick, and the churches stand on opposite hills high

above the town. The church of Wolborough is celebrated for its beautiful and highly-coloured screen, and for a sumptuous monument in the chancel to Richard and Lucy Reynell, of Ford, the former of whom died in 1633, the latter in 1652. Both names will be found in a cryptogram inscribed upon the monument, and which runs thus :

‘ Who Care to Live who Live & love to leaRne
Who leArne to dyE shall In their Deaths dYscerne
Such caRes rewaRde, thUs live You all in whiCh
You shall livE happy aNd beE sure dyE rycH.’

Except that there is an E too many and an L too few, the letters cut in capitals make ‘ Richard and Lucy Reynell.’

But the lady is also commemorated in an acrostic couched in terms so involved as to be scarcely intelligible, and with grammar as peculiar as its rhyme :

‘ Loe here sate maiesty with Meeknesse crownd
Vaild under Reverence was Courtship found
Composed were all such graces in her mind
Yee knew in Morralist or Christian shind.

‘ Refuge of strangers prophets Joynturesse
Easy Chirurgion Poore Mens’ Treasuresse
Youths’ awe, and age’s Honor : To God when
(Not thus to man) imployd in prayers and penn
Eate though this marble if Time shall, she hath
Left upon living stones her epitaph.’

This remarkable woman appears to have possessed all the known virtues—and more. But how she could have afforded ‘refuge’ to *prophets* in the seventeenth century I do not understand.

Newton, though not actually on the Teign, is very near it—is, in fact, but a few minutes’ walk from its tidal waters, for we are now drawing near the end of our journey. The main line of the Great Western runs direct from it to Teignmouth, and he who is lazily disposed may easily reach the latter town, thereby skirting the very margin of the estuary, and getting delightful views of the

green hills opposite. But no one who knows the country at all well will miss the road by Combe Teignhead and Shaldon.

For a mile or two after leaving Newton we see nothing of the river, which is no loss, as it flows to the head of the estuary through low marshy fields. We are climbing the long, stony Milber Hill (the northern end of Milber Down), bordered by oaks which cast a grateful shade over the banks. Arrived at the summit, where heather and bracken struggle for the mastery, the eye roams over the lower part of the Teign Valley to the border tors of Dartmoor, looking grim enough when contrasted with the fertile country at their feet. Presently, by a hill equally steep, we descend to Netherton, a pretty hamlet with a clear stream running across the road, and then with one or two more ups and downs reach Combe Teignhead, which has an ancient schoolhouse with mullions of carved oak to the windows, and a little red church. In a few hundred yards the Teign once more appears, no longer a rushing stream but a wide estuary. For a moment it is seen through the trees fifty feet below, then the road makes a sudden bend, and we look down upon it from a low cliff of red sandstone hung with thorn and hazel. Right under our feet the waves wash a gravelly beach. Half a mile distant, on a little spit of land jutting into the waters, is Combe Cellars, an inn where cockles may be partaken of by those who love such dainties; beyond, a distant reach of river from which the hills rise, or rather undulate, towards the blue moors. The rocks of Hay Tor—the Langdale Pikes of Devonshire, as someone has called them—are especially conspicuous on the extreme right, and almost equally so the loftiest hill on the south-eastern part of Dartmoor—Rippon Tor.

Across the estuary, here a mile wide, the bright-looking village of Bishop's Teignton spreads along the slope. Teignmouth itself is just beyond, but is not yet visible;

indeed, it comes into view rather suddenly. You turn another corner—this road is full of them, each with an unexpected view—and there it is against a background of deep-blue sea. Presently Shaldon, with its picturesque cottages, is seen below, stretching along the strand, a village where sea-captains of all shapes and colours come to their last moorings, as anyone may see by the white flagstaffs and the figureheads staring in ghastly stiffness from the rockeries and alcoves in the trim little gardens. The road divided from the pebbly shore but by a low wall is a warm, sunny place for a stroll, and much tobacco is consumed there both morning and evening by these ancient mariners, who (the while gazing placidly at the river) agree that the Lords of the Admiralty nowadays are no better than they should be, and that her Majesty's navy is going fast to perdition. As for the skippers of the Mercantile Marine—as the merchant service is now grandly called—having no lords to gird at, they are less disposed to lament the days that have fled, and yarn away happily enough, with a not unpleasant consciousness that the sliding deck, the crashing spar, and 'the rattling shrouds all sheathed in ice,' are for them but so many memories of a time which few would return to if they could.

Shaldon is joined to Teignmouth by an interminable bridge—mostly wooden—of some thirty-six or thirty-seven openings: I confess I gave up counting. It is said to be one of the longest in England, and is certainly one of the windiest. To cross it in winter with a grim north wind coming straight down from snow-covered Dartmoor must be an experience of the most *searching* character.

To me there is something very pleasant about Teignmouth. I suppose its principal charm lies in the wide breezy lawns of the Den, which, unattractive as is the name, stretches along the sea-front a good half-mile, gay with flowers. Then there is the gay lighthouse at the

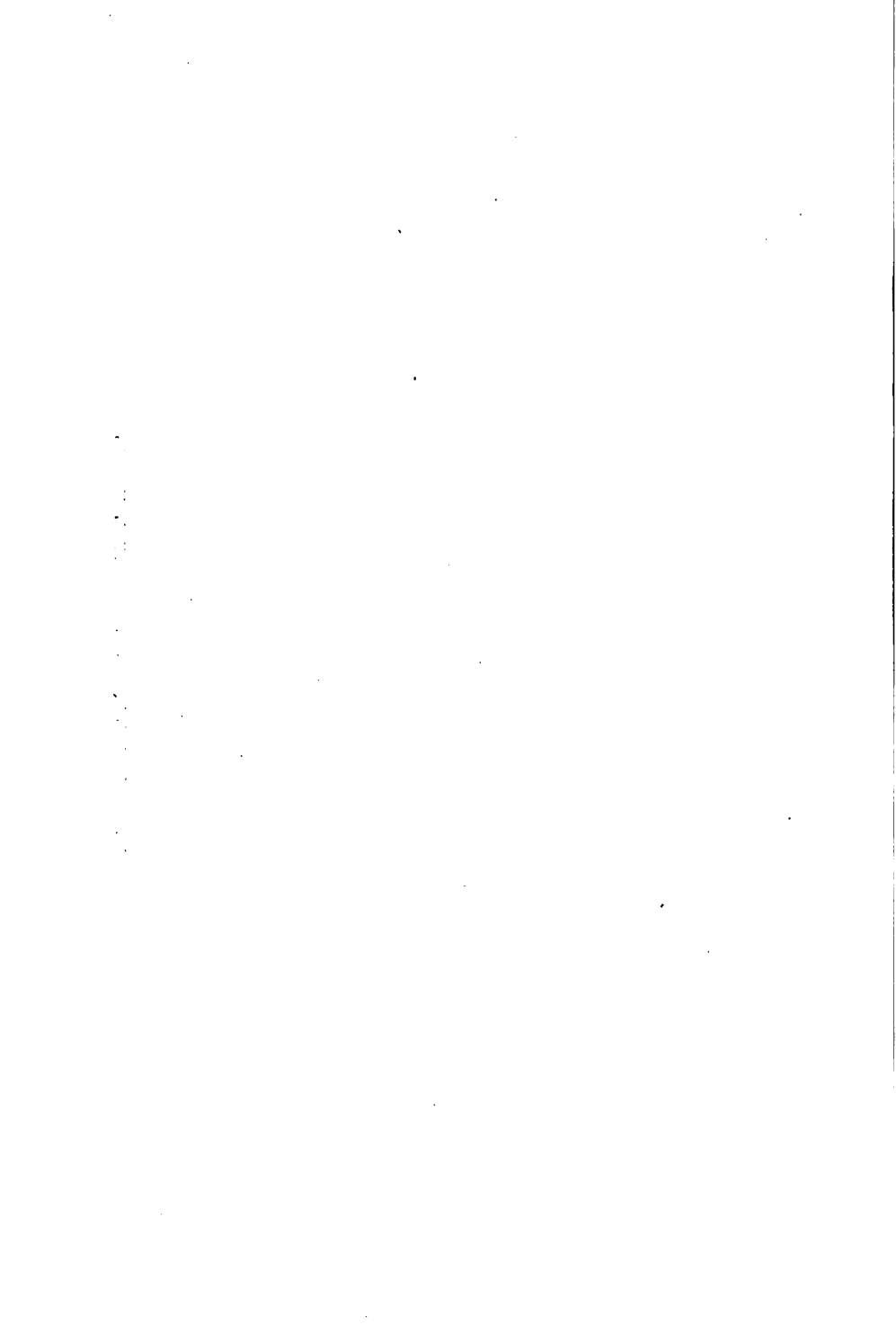
end next the river, where you will always find a sailor or two basking, as only sailors can, and ready to converse on any subject maritime. And as they lounge there the eddying Teign pours its flood into the sea—pours it swiftly, too; for here, as at Exmouth, the silting sands have narrowed its embouchure to a narrow compass. High against the southern sky the Ness rears its head, not a grim head, either, for is it not crowned with foliage and draped about the shoulders with greenery? which together finely set off the colouring of the cliff—colouring so red that an absurd local legend credits its hue to the Danes, who, after their manner, committed great carnage here nine hundred and odd years ago. The French, too, descended upon Teignmouth in the fourteenth century, and burnt it to the ground. More than three hundred years later they attacked it again. It was in 1690, the year in which Admiral Tourville dispersed Lord Torrington's squadron off Beachy Head. Sailing away down channel, he came upon the defenceless town, set it on fire, and even burnt part of Shaldon.

But the Den need not bound your walk, for northward the great sea-wall, which Brunel built to keep the waves from his railway, stretches right away to the Parson and Clerk rocks—those very unclerical-looking pillars of red sandstone standing off the next point towards Dawlish. And as you stroll along the path which runs along the top you shall hear how the Parson and Clerk came to have these names.

Once upon a time a Bishop of Exeter lay ill at Dawlish. To visit him there frequently came a wicked priest from the other side of the cathedral city, who thought—whether with good cause or not, I cannot say—that some day he might be the Bishop's successor. One day he started as usual, accompanied by his clerk; but, as luck would have it, they got too far out on Haldon, and, night coming on, lost their way. So the priest called on the Devil to help



THE MOUTH OF THE TEIGN. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED.



him. A peasant appeared, and led them to what seemed to them a neighbouring manor-house, where they were bidden to supper. But as they sat at meat the fish before them appeared to swim, the sea roared in their ears. Presently they were informed that the Bishop was dying from poison, and they set out on their homeward journey. Suddenly 'the demon house vanished amid screams and wild laughter as of fiends mocking; the foam burst over their heads; two horses were found straying in the morning on the shore, and two huge loosened masses of sandstone became at once their riders' grave and monument.'* In stormy weather the shrieks of the parson and his clerk are still heard above the gale.

The two churches of Teignmouth are remarkable for their ugliness. The older is said to have a Saxon tower, which, if a fact, *may* be an extenuating circumstance. But the church of St. Michael, whose ornate tower is quite a feature of East Teignmouth, has nothing to recommend it. Neither venerable antiquity nor modern taste is to be found in its pretentious architecture. This unfortunate church presents, indeed, every specimen of ecclesiastical architecture that England has ever seen, and some of them mixed in a manner that is almost ludicrous.

Let us climb the hill behind and look across the roofs of the many villas towards the cliffs that stretch away to Torbay, thankful that the architecture of Nature knows nothing of such debased muddles. It is a beautiful sweep—a sweep so extensive that, says an old 'sailorman' (as *he* would call himself), 'you can, on a clear day, make out the Bill of Portland.' And there is nothing to break the line except the tall steeple of Marychurch, above Torquay, a landmark for miles. Off the pier head the *Duchess* is

* Mackenzie Walcott's 'Coasts of Devon and Cornwall.' The story is also told (with some variation) in Mrs. Whitcombe's 'Bygone Days in Devon and Cornwall.'

lying, a thin coil of steam rising in the morning air. She is bound for our next river—the Dart. Such an opportunity is too good to be neglected. We will once more take ship and pass down the lovely coast to the famous seaport that has for so many centuries looked down upon the meeting of Dart with the sea. We do not take it, however, in any too pleasant a manner. The pier, unfortunately, is private property, and the owner, I am told, declines to erect a landing-stage. Consequently the steamer has to lie to outside, and passengers can only reach her in boats. And a very disagreeable transit it is, particularly (and this is often the case) when the long rollers come into the bay, lifting the boats in a manner highly objectionable to the nervous ladies—and sometimes gentlemen, too—lingering in agony on the steep iron staircase for a favourable chance to take the trying spring.*

* Since writing the above, I understand that the pier has been purchased by the Devon Steamship Company, and is to be lengthened fifty feet.

CHAPTER VI

THE DART—TO TOTNES.

Dartmouth Castle—Gallants' Bower—Dartmouth—A Meeting of the Crusaders—Historical Associations—Davis and Raleigh—Newcomen—St. Saviour's Church and John Hawley—Kingswear—The Voyage to Totnes—Greenway—The Anchor Stone and Sir Walter Raleigh—Dittisham—Sandridge and John Davis—Galmpton—A 'Female Waterwoman'—Sharpham—Totnes—Berry Pomeroy and John Prince—Berry Pomeroy Castle—Sir Edward Seymour—The Pomeroyes—The Workman and the Apothecary.

' Bold is the rush of the kingly Rhine,
Bright is his coronet, bright is his wine ;
Soft in the shade of his mountain zone
Laughs the blue glance of the bounding Rhone.
Proudly the yellow-haired Tiber may flow,
Singing his dirge to the dead below.
Which of the river-gods, which may it be,
Beautiful Dart, to be mated with thee ?'

WHITFIELD.

PAST gray Petit Tor and myrtle-embowered Babbicombe, past Anstis Cove, a sapphire set in pearl, the steamer glides, and, rounding the rocky islets, enters Torbay and glides alongside Lord Haldon's Pier. There is but a few minutes to look round the harbour, with its flotilla of yachts, when we are off again, and with a splendid view of the steep villa-covered hills astern steam past Brixham, with its memories of William of Orange, past Berry Head and down a more rugged coast to a great mass of rock called the Mewstone. This is the mark for Dartmouth, and as we pass it there is a sudden rift in the line of

cliffs; the mouth of 'the English Rhine,' narrow, and dominated by steep hills, comes into view, and we meet the stream as it 'comes slowly, and as it were tired,' to meet the sea.

On a low rocky point commanding the southern entrance to this the most romantic of English estuaries stands Dartmouth Castle,* with a round and a square tower; the former, built in the reign of Henry VII., is the older. Near it are the remains of a building earlier still; a modern battery, and the quaint little church of St. Petrox—strange situation for such a building—the whole being surrounded by a wall and fosse.

In days gone by a chain was stretched across the harbour mouth (known, by the way, by the very suggestive name of the *Fawbones*) to the ruin opposite, rendering entrance by an enemy's ship very difficult, if not impossible. The harbour of Fowey, in Cornwall, which has an approach very similar to that of Dartmouth, was guarded in like manner.

Behind the castle the summit of the lofty hill called Gallants' Bower, wooded almost from base to summit, commands a magnificent view of the landlocked harbour within; of the sea and of the opposite tower of Kingswear, said to be older even than Dartmouth—though it scarcely looks so—above which rise other lofty hills, so that Dart at his death, as at his birth, is overlooked by high ground. They are very green and lovely, these hills, here parcelled out into green pastures, there covered with trees, but always sloping steep to the water's edge in curves of much beauty. I expect this Gallants' Bower well deserves its name, and that there was much squiring of dames in the woods of the same in the days of Prince Maurice, when the fort on the summit, mentioned in one of the despatches of Fairfax, was not the ruin it is now.

* Sometimes called Clifton Castle, from the old name Clifton-Dartmouth-Hardness, by which name Dartmouth was incorporated in 1342.

Inside the point Dartmouth climbs the hillside. It is built for the most part in terraces, apparently with a beautiful disregard of anything like plan. Here a street boldly faces the slope; here there are steps instead. Occasionally the first-floor windows of one house look into the attic windows of another. 'The town,' says Prince, 'is situated on the side of a very steep hill, which runneth from east to west, a considerable length of near a mile, whereby the houses as you pass on the water seem pensil, and to hang along in rows, like galley-pots in an apothecary's shop, for so high and steep is it that you go from the lower to the upper part thereof by stairs, and from the top requires no less—in some places many more—than a hundred.' Now and then the stranger rambling through the uneven streets comes upon buildings bearing dates, and of a fashion which carry the thoughts back to the days of Civil War, or even earlier. There is the Butter Row, for instance, a line of quaintly-carved, half-wooden, half-stone tenements, over a sort of piazza, near the quay; there is the house of Newcomen (of whom more presently), and divers others, both in the thoroughfare with the old-sounding name of Fosse Street and in the uneuphonious *Shambles*.

For its size no town in England is richer in historical associations. From it in 1190 sailed part of Cœur de Lion's Crusade. Let us pause a moment, and, closing our eyes and padlocking our minds against this nineteenth century, try to fancy ourselves back at the latter end of the twelfth, watching the ships hurrying to the rendezvous. 'From Fowey, from Plymouth, round they come, great lumbering, hulking, unwieldy craft, with their hundred oars plying wearily even in these calm waters, carrying gold, silver, horses, and men for the fray; and, besides these, as an old chronicler has it, "whatever shippes may want except the mast and the shippe's boat," though why he made the exception remains a riddle.'

'Here they come, with the foot soldiers standing in the bows, sounding their clarions, the horses huddled together in the crowded stern, and the galley-slaves wearily wielding the impossible oars. In, in, one after another, with all the bravery of flags flying and the trumpet's blast; aye, and the great courage of a thousand loyal hearts, for they are assembling to greet Richard the Lion, and to follow him in the great cause of the Holy Sepulchre. We watch them start, and hear of the prosperous journey to Messina, where "so great was the clashing of their arms, so noble the sound of their trumpets and clarions, that the city quaked." Nevertheless, we marvel not that but a small portion of that infant navy lived to return.'*

In 1347 Dartmouth sent more ships to the siege of Calais than any town in England, save Yarmouth and Fowey, a compliment returned thirty years later by the French, who pretty well reduced it to ashes. And then began a long and bitter feud with France. Even private individuals engaged in it; a Dartmouth merchant, John Hawley, equipping a fleet at his own expense. With this, in 1389, he took no less than thirty-four vessels laden with wine from La Rochelle. What a carouse his sailors must have had! Then Plymouth, angry at a descent upon her, joined Dartmouth, and in 1403 the allies swooped down upon the northern coasts, and enjoyed a very full revenge for the miseries inflicted on both. In the following year the French attempted to retaliate. But this time Dartmouth was better prepared: the countryside rose *en masse*, even the ladies helping, and the Frenchmen were driven off with a loss of 400 killed and some 200 prisoners, including the commander, Du Chastel.

In the Wars of the Roses Dartmouth declared for the Lancastrians. Hence Warwick the King-maker and

* 'Dartmouth, Past and Present,' by F. A. Fulcher, in the *Western Magazine and Portfolio*, March, 1891.

'false and perjured Clarence,' having quarrelled with Edward, and being proclaimed traitors, sailed for Calais, the former erelong to return and die like a man at Barnet, the latter to perish like a rat in a winebutt. And yet Edward proved a good friend to the town, for ten years after Barnet field we find him interesting himself in the fortifications, which he appears to have placed under the care of its inhabitants.

Of course Dartmouth was well to the fore when 'that great fleet invincible' swept up the English Channel. No seadogs of Devon hung more persistently on the flanks of the great unwieldy galleons than those commanding the flotilla that sailed from the 'Jawbones' of the Dart. And having done their share in worrying the Dons, the captains returned to their merchant employers, the John Hawleys of the day—he, good man, was of course long dead—ready for any deeds of daring that might be suggested, not always too particular, perhaps, as to the means employed.

For these were stirring days—'days,' says the writer whom I have before ventured to quote, 'when pluck and daring paid—days when we were apparently unknowing of what made right or wrong; when the military sided as often with the governed as with the governing; when the police force was but a dream in the brains of a few visionaries; when the law itself had not yet decided who were law-breakers and who law-abiding, for kings granted licences for piracy, and smugglers paid tribute to the lord of the manor.'

Later, when Charles fell out with his people, the town declared for the Parliament. It was at this time well fortified, and Prince Maurice had a hard task to take it. However, after a siege of a month he succeeded, and for three years it supported a Royalist garrison—*nolens volens*. But one January day in 1646 the indomitable Fairfax made his appearance, the forts were carried, and Dart-

mouth once more fell to the Roundheads. Since then its lot has been peaceful.

More than one of the great sailors who in the sixteenth century made Devon so famous first saw the light by the windings of Dart. John Davis the navigator, the good Sir Humphrey Gilbert, the story of whose end in the *Squirrel* is, or ought to be, known to us all, were both born hard by Dartmouth. Sir Walter Raleigh, too, though not a native, loved the neighbourhood, and it is said smoked his first pipe in England at Greenway; and—coming to a later day—the name of that steamer lying by the New Ground waiting to embark her complement of holiday-makers, reminds us of another name greatly honoured in the mouths of Dartmouth men—that of Newcomen, who, nearly two hundred years ago, rose from being a humble tradesman to a foremost place in the ranks of our great engineers.

Let us mount to the church of St. Saviour. It is gloomy and close, and of the earth earthy, exhaling an odour infinitely more depressing if less pungent than the 'ancient and fishlike smell' pervading some of the streets below. But it is a handsome old building this church, built when Edward III. was King. Its richly-carved and painted stone pulpit and oaken screen are both fine pieces of workmanship. Curious rather than beautiful is the extraordinary pattern in ironwork on the south door; it represents a tree impaling lions or dogs. I suppose it has some history, but I have never yet come across the person who knew it. Then there is Brockeden's fine painting of the 'Raising of the Widow's Son at Nain' over the altar; and, by the way, this artist is another worthy of whom Dartmouth has good cause to be proud. And of course John Hawley's tomb is there, whose success is still told in Dartmouth in the lines:

'Blow the wind high
Or blow it low,
It bloweth fair for Hawley's Hoe.'

There he lies, and above him is his effigy worked in brass, and there are the effigies of his two wives, who bear him company. He is rightly buried in the chancel built at his own cost about the end of the fourteenth century.

St. Saviour's is not the mother church. To see this we must begin climbing again, till we reach the top of the hill above the town. St. Clement's, or Townstall Church, as it is generally called, is, like St. Saviour's, cruciform, and is even older. But it is not so interesting, and has little of note beyond a rather fine canopied tomb. It must be admitted, however, that it is in far better repair; the state of St. Saviour's, indeed, calls loudly for restoration. We hope that this restoration—which must come some day, unless the congregation want the tower about their ears—will be carried out in a judicious spirit, and with due regard to the old-world appearance of the surroundings. For I know of few towns in England on which such an air of the past rests as Dartmouth; and, though I cannot say that I have experienced it myself, I can quite believe that writer in the *Argosy* who has lately paid so amusing a tribute not only to Dartmouth, but to the language of its inhabitants, which he appears to think almost as quaint and old as the town itself. He says that it is very unlike English, full of expressions unintelligible to the ordinary Briton. 'As for the genders,' he concludes, 'they are hopelessly mixed. It has been said that everything in Devonshire and Cornwall is masculine, except a tom cat, which is invariably spoken of as *she*.'

As for Kingswear, though traditionally older than Dartmouth, it is far less attractive. From it, however, the most extensive (I do not say the *best*) view of the latter town is to be had, and it is worth while climbing to Mount Ridley, where there is a fort that played an important part in the Civil War. Fairfax calls it *Kingsworth*, and this

was, I presume, the ancient name of the town beneath. Worth, in the mouth of 'the vulgar Devonian' (as old Fuller has it), speedily becomes *Wor*, and the mutation into *wear* is not very great. It is said that the place took its name from a visit paid it by King John—a very doubtful honour. However, as King's worth means the King's place, I dare say the story is true enough. At any rate Dartmouth has that most contemptible of English monarchs in the town arms, where he figures in a bout holding—save the mark!—the cross and crescent of the Crusades!

And now the time has come for us to explore that watery highway lying between Dartmouth and Totnes, the most celebrated piece of river scenery in England. Whether the up or down route is the more picturesque, I, for one, am puzzled to say. The point is at least as doubtful as that which formed the occasion of an argument between two passengers on a coach in Monmouthshire. 'The scenery on this road from Monmouth to Tintern must be the finest in the country!' exclaimed one. 'No sir,' said another, 'the scenery on the road from Tintern to Monmouth is finer.' They agreed to differ. Many visitors to the Dart have agreed to differ too. How can they help it?

Yet I cannot help thinking that the Dart has been a little too much 'written up'—too much, I mean, in comparison with the estuaries of other West-Country rivers, some of which deserve nearly, if not quite, so warm a meed of praise as does this favourite river. Where is the Fal, the Fowey, the Tamar, even the Yealm? Surely the winding waters on which the towers of Tregothnan look down may claim a notice almost as enthusiastic as that accorded to the stream, which reflects the cottages of Dittisham. Granted that the town of Totnes, at the head of the tideway, is more picturesque than the gray houses of Truro lying around the—at present—ugly new

cathedral. But even then the Fal falls little short of the Dart.

And so with the little Fowey, a mixture of Fal and Dart; so with the Tamar, which, if you can forget the mines and the muddy water, is a very dangerous rival indeed; so with the bright Yealm, with its creeks of Kitley and Coffleet. I do not wish to disparage the Dart, remember; it is a river I love. But fairness compels me to make a protest against its monopolizing *all* the honours. Many, who do not know this fair Western land as I do, go away with the mistaken idea that there is only one really beautiful river in Devonshire and Cornwall—and that that is the Dart.

But while this comparison—I fear to many odious—is being made, the bell rings at the pontoon, and a burly mariner shouts, ‘Any more for the Totnes steamer?’. We hurry down and embark on the not too luxurious boat which the Great Western Railway Company provides for the adventurous voyager. The harbour is full of craft, mostly yachts, though there is a huge Castle liner off Kingswear, not to speak of divers coal-hulks, which latter are certainly anything but additions to the beauty of the scene. But the paddles strike the water, and the little vessel glides past them, past the *Britannia* and *Hindostan*, the two training ships connected by a covered gangway, and presently, turning a corner, romantic Dartmouth and unromantic hulks vanish from sight.

About two miles above Dartmouth, Greenway House, where Sir Humphrey Gilbert was born, rises from the trees, which here thickly cover the hillside. Below, where the river narrows suddenly, and the water is green with the reflection of the foliage, is the Anchor Stone, frequented, so tradition goes, by Sir Walter Raleigh when he wished for a quiet pipe! There were no steamers in those days, and he can have had little let or hindrance

from an unappreciative world. For it is no secret that we did not at first take kindly to the soothing weed, and it is on record that Sir Walter's own 'gentleman's gentleman' threw a bucketful of water over his master under the impression that he was on fire.

I have said that there were no steamers in the days of the Virgin Queen. But possibly I am in error. A few years ago I remember calling at the office of a large coaling firm to solicit a subscription towards the National Armada Memorial, since erected on Plymouth Hoe. The manager declined. 'No,' he said, politely but firmly, 'I can't do it; it might offend the Spaniards. We have a large connection with Spain, and had we lived in those times we must have supplied the Armada *with the best steam coal to escape the English ships.*' Again I say perhaps I was wrong.

But not to all mariners is the Anchor Stone so welcome as it was to Raleigh. The crew of the *William*, for instance, will speak of it in terms anything but complimentary. Whether they were to blame I know not, but there is no doubt that *they* blamed the rock when it sent their ship to the bottom of the Dart, fifteen fathoms below. Nor do I expect that the skipper of our steamer regards it with much favour when he comes down the river—as he often has done—on a thick night, 'steering,' to use his own words, 'by the tops of the trees.'

All about this, the narrowest part of its channel for some distance, the scenery is very lovely, the steep hills being wooded almost to the waters' edge. There is a ferry, too, at Dittisham, and the ferry bell, although but an ordinary one hung between two posts roofed with a bit of metal, stands out prettily against the sombre background. Dittisham itself is a highly picturesque village climbing a lane through orchards of apple and plum, the last-named fruit serving with *cockles*—awful and indigestible conjunction—to while away the time for those

trippers (and they are many) to whom the scenery is quite a secondary consideration.

Round the next bend, where the river widens suddenly at Galmpton Bay to nearly two miles, is Sandridge, where Davis was born. It stands on the right, overlooking a gently-sloping park, for the hills have for a season left us. Beneath the woods is a picturesque boathouse—more picturesque than the mansion, which looks modern enough, and has evidently few traces of the house which was the birthplace of the bold navigator. For bold John Davis was. We make a deal of fuss nowadays over the hare-brained individual who—for pecuniary motives—crosses the Atlantic in a cockle-shell of a few tons. But three hundred years ago Davis did a feat much more difficult. Then there were no big steamers (unless my friend the manager is to be believed) and very few sailing ships to succour the distressed mariner. Certainly not a thousandth part of the number that almost crowds that ocean now. Yet Davis with two tiny vessels, one of but thirty-five tons burden, in his search for the North-West passage, reached the open water between Greenland and the American Continent, and gave his name to *Davis Straits*. A pity it is that such a man should, after a life of useful discovery, have gone down before the kriss of an Eastern pirate. Yet so it was.

Of his noble neighbour, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, I have said little. His name will live for ever among Englishmen—the name of the best and purest, and not the least brave, of those men of Devon who helped to make the reign of Elizabeth one of the most glorious in our annals. Brave men there were in plenty, but of pure men there were few. Drake, whether rightly or wrongly, was accused of piracy, Hawkins of slave-dealing: sundry others whose names occur to me had not always clean hands. There is an epitaph written on Hawkins of which Gilbert is at least equally worthy:

Galmpton.

'The waters were his winding-sheete,
The sea was made his Toome,
Yet for his fame the ocean sea
Was not sufficient roome.'

At the head of Galmpton Bay or Creek is the little village that gives it its name. You can see nothing of it from midstream, but it is well worth a special visit either by boat or by the railway to Churston Station, which is only about a mile distant. Here there is a little quay and a yard for boat-building. Piles of timber lie along the waterside. At the back a limestone bluff faces a wooded hill scarred with quarries. Up the valley winds the road to Torquay. 'Galmpton,' writes an artist in the *Magazine of Art*, 'is one of the many sweet little nooks, full of bright greenery and homely repose, that minister the most unexpected charm to all who suddenly take in their beauty with a fresh surprise.'

Opposite Sandridge, if we turn about, we again see Dittisham, and under quite another aspect. This time it is the upper part of the village, overlooked by the red-brown church. And in less than a mile we come upon another view of Sandridge. The windings of the Dart are indeed marvellous. Soon the pretty little village of Stoke Gabriel shows itself lying along a creek to the right. The landing-place is at Duncannon, a hamlet of three or four cottages round the next point. Here it was, I think, that I first made acquaintance with a Dart waterwoman.

For women, as well as men, row on the Dart, and row well. This estuary is a regular fishing colony, and both male and female can handle a boat from a very early age indeed. This lady was a lusty young woman who sent her craft through the water right manfully. Our skipper stopped the engines and watched her approvingly. 'Ah!' he remarked, 'look *there*, if you want to see a good *female waterwoman*. I had rather see that wench bring a boat alongside than any sailorman.' The 'female waterwoman'

certainly justified his praise, coming in to the steamer's side with wonderful dexterity. She lost not a minute, but, scorning male assistance, clambered on board accompanied by a rosy-cheeked country girl, also apparently well known to our captain. 'Look 'ere,' he said, with rough humour, 'we're chock full to-day, and *you* don't want to look at the scenery. You go below, and then I shall know where to find 'ee when I want 'ee. Go ahead, Jim.' And amidst the laughter of the passengers the steamer moved on.

And now, passing the mouth of the Harbourne estuary, into which runs a stream renowned for its trout, we steam beneath *the* foliage of the Dart, the nearly-precipitous woods of Sharpham rising some 200 feet sheer from the river. The curious manner in which the lower branches are cut in a level line by the salt-water is here particularly noticeable. Herons flap along the water or stand in the shallows—stand in solemn dignity in marked contrast to the rooks, of which there are thousands filling the air with their hoarse notes. Sharpham House looks straight down upon the river, which has now become so narrow, and the scene so rural, that one almost feels sceptical at being told that this reach is a great place for *bass*; though a group of fishermen hauling in the salmon seine seems natural enough, for, as everyone knows, the salmon fishing of the Dart is quite an industry of itself. Under Sharpham Woods the Dart, in my opinion, is lovelier than at any point between Dartmouth and Totnes, and is, if possible, rather improved than spoiled by the Swiss boathouse unobtrusively placed in a shadowy corner of the woods.

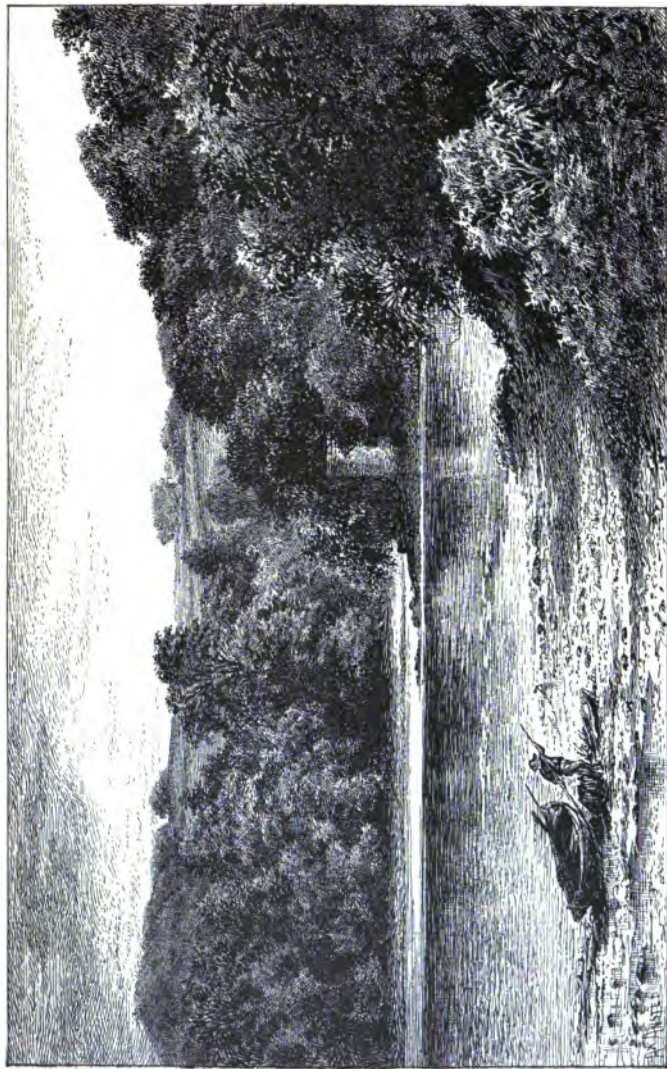
It is with regret that we leave this scene behind and thread the low grassy islets beyond on our way to the last reach of the navigable part of the river, which, bordered by emerald meadows or sloping fields, stretches right up to Totnes.

Totnes never looks so well as when seen from the river. High on its hill it stands overshadowed by the tall tower of the church. And higher still behind it rise the great downs of Dartmoor, to-day of a rich blue, though not seldom raggedly clad in storm wrack or sullen beneath an angry heaven. The steamer slows down; a wharf is passed with one or two barges and a schooner moored to the posts; then we stop beside the humblest thing in the way of a landing-place that can be imagined about 400 yards short of the town. Our voyage is at an end.

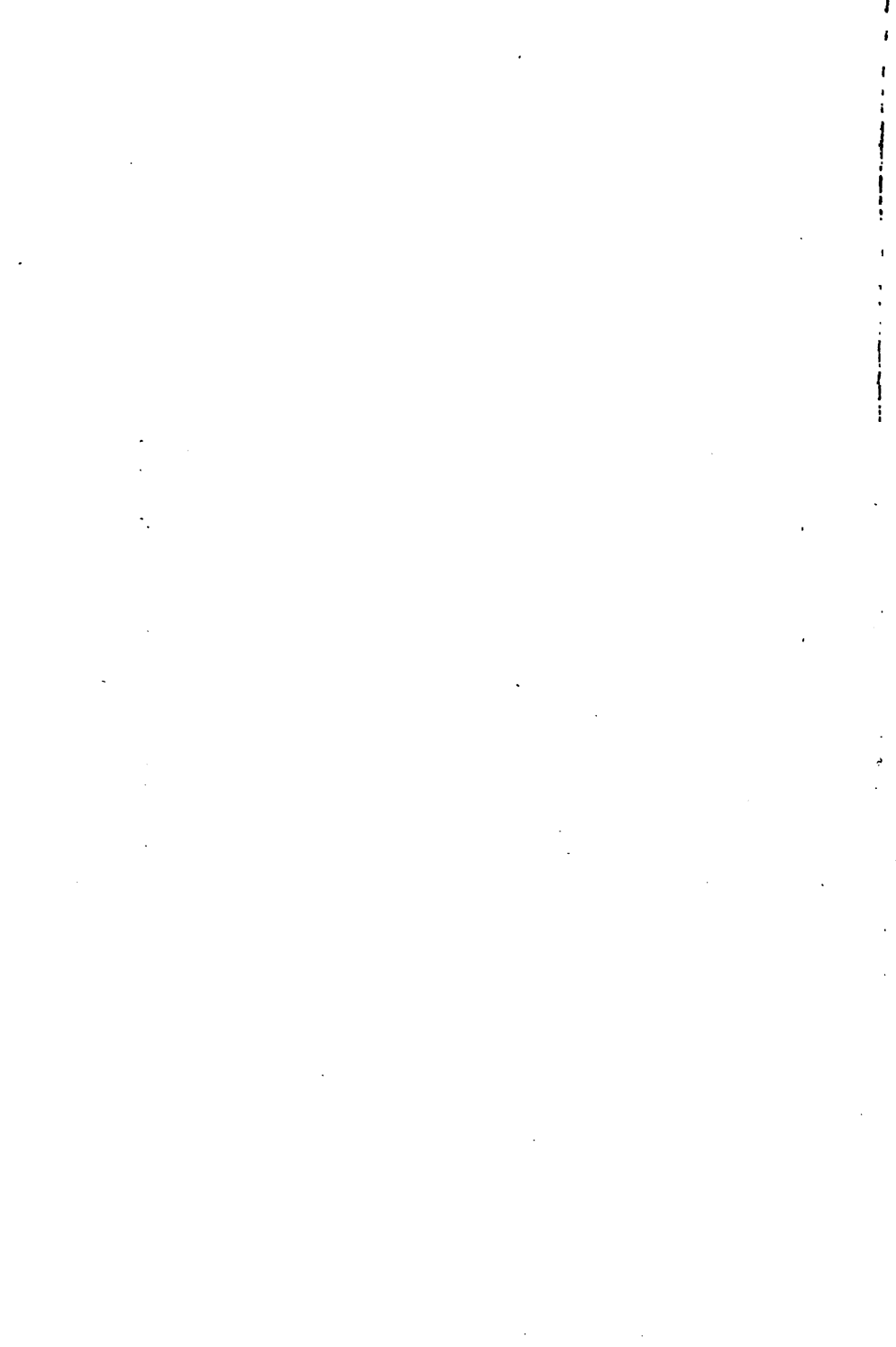
A shady, and as often as not, very muddy lane leads from the landing-place to a handsome stone bridge over which we pass to Totnes. The steep street going like a Roman road right up the hill has an appearance which at once shows that Totnes is no modern town. Indeed, it is one of the most ancient in England, though I suppose no one now believes in the story that Brutus of Troy landed here,* first setting foot upon the granite boulder now built into the pavement opposite number 51, Fore Street. By the way, granite is not the geological formation of this part of the country; though possibly the stone may have come down in a freshet of the river. Nor is the said stone anywhere near the banks of the Dart. But the river in those days, said an old inhabitant of whom I asked an explanation, 'flowed where the stone is now.' If it did, it must have run uphill, for the spot in question is a good fifty feet above its present bed. Nevertheless, as the old man said, the fame of the Brutus stone is sufficient to attract many visitors, and it has a further claim to reverence from the fact that the Mayor

* 'From hence great Brute with his Achates steer'd;
Full fraught with Gallic spoils their ships appear'd.
The winds and gods were all at their command,
And happy Totnes shew'd them grateful land.'—CAMDEN.

The Totnes of the myth was not the town, but probably some part of the coast between the Salcombe estuary and Torbay. The name signifies the *projecting headland*. Vide R. J. King's *Devonshire* in the *Quarterly Review*, April, 1859.



THE DART AT SHARPHAM. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED.



of the little borough has for generations proclaimed therefrom the accession of our sovereigns.

The walls of Totnes town have gone the way of ruin, and but two gates remain to show its situation: East-gate, above the Brutus stone, dividing steep Fore Street from steeper High Street, a rather commonplace, much-altered gatehouse with Perpendicular windows; and Northgate, a rude old Norman arch close to the castle.

This castle we shall presently visit, but close to East-gate is the church, a building that deserves more attention. Without going into the history of its predecessors, it may be stated that the present building was erected in 1432. It is famous for its magnificently-carved and painted *stone* screen. There are also *parclose* screens, but these are not coloured. A kind of porch to the roodstairs is painted in red and gold, and in its wall are the remains of two *piscinæ*.

Almost as much admired as the screen is the lofty warm-coloured tower topped by the crocketed pinnacles that we shall see often as we get further west, but uncommon in this part of the county. It has three niches: in one stands the statue of Bishop Lacy, in whose episcopate it was built, or rather rebuilt. Under the figure are the words, 'I made the Tour.' The south porch is also handsome, and the door a good piece of carved Jacobean work. The most noticeable monument is that to the much-married Christopher Blackhall, who kneels above the figures of his five wives.

I learn that in the churchyard is a curious punning epitaph on one Edward Luke, a shoemaker. For the benefit of those interested in such poetic vagaries I transcribe it, *italics* and all:

'Here Edward Luke full six feet deep in earth
Lies stretched at length; who almost from his birth
Was mending *soles*; though having strength of breath
Was ever *at his ends*, yet feared not death.
Among his friends so joyous and so gay
One boundless passion did him lead away.

Mirth called him brother, and he did fulfil
 The laws laid down by mirth's own *measure* well.
 Young Luke some called him. Ah, how altered now !
 For underneath he lies with wrinkled brow.
 Reader ! remember, at one single call
 We go from hence, for God is *awl* in *awl*.'

On the north side of the church is the Guildhall, a small building. It boasts of two curiosities—the stocks and an ancient water-pipe consisting of an elm trunk hollowed out. On the wall hangs a fine painting by Burchedon, the subject being a scene from Ossian's Poems. The council-chamber, which communicates with the hall by steps, has a fine old chest, and the Town Clerk's chair is a quaint piece of furniture.

Further up the street are the rows or piazzas which give this part of the town such an old-world appearance. The pavement passes under the projecting slate-covered fronts of the houses, which are supported by pillars. A few yards beyond we turn to the right and reach the castle.

The castle was built by Judhael. de Totnais, a follower of the Conqueror. Beyond the keep, which stands on a precipitous knoll—still in part surrounded by the moat—little of Judhael's fortress remains. It rises from some pleasant gardens laid out by the late Duke of Somerset. In shape the keep is circular. By ascending the stair we may walk round the battlements level with the pinnacles of the church. Hence is a perfect view of the town far below, a reach of the Dart, and the tors of the distant moor. A fragment of wall descends from the keep, and may be traced towards the outer moat.

Another and far more interesting castle lies not far from Totnes. No one doing the Dart should omit a visit to Berry Pomeroy. It is about three miles from the town. The road passes through Berry Pomeroy village, where the church, though naturally smaller than that of Totnes, is nearly as handsome. It is of Perpen-

dicular date, and its principal feature, like its neighbour, is a very fine screen of thirteen openings—but of oak—richly gilded, the lower panels filled with figures. At the end of the north aisle is a monument to Lord Edward Seymour, who died in 1593; and to his son, Edward Seymour, Baronet, and the Lady Elizabeth, his wife, “who,” says the inscription, “had issue eleven children,” nine of whom are represented kneeling on the lower tier of the monument; of the others one lies in a cradle at the head, while the other—and a most comical little figure it is—occupies an *armchair* at the feet of their mother, who lies just above. Above her recline the figures of her husband and father-in-law, in full armour. The south porch has a fine groined roof, with some curious bosses.

One of the rectors of this parish was John Prince, author of the well-known and now very expensive ‘*Worthies of Devon*,’ who died in 1723. A contemporary wrote of him and his *magnum opus* thus :

‘You’ve done the work, sir, but you can’t be paid
Until among those worthies you are laid ;
Then future ages will unjustly do
To write of worthies and to leave out you.’

On the hill above the village you get one of the finest views in Devonshire. Although some time since, I well remember the impression it made upon me. It was a summer’s evening, near sunset, and the air, after the recent thunder showers, was peculiarly clear. Dartmoor stretched away in the distance from beyond Hey Tor to Ivybridge. At one moment the tor was blotted out by a shower, the next wrapped in a golden haze, or standing out a deep-blue purple. Far away through an opening in the hills the rocky heights of Cornwall, distant at least forty miles, showed their pale outline against the western heavens. In the foreground lay the rich vale of the Dart, with Totnes looking down from its hillside.

From such a scene as this I descended by a rough road winding through a wood to the old castle built by Ralph de Pomerai soon after the Conquest. Two hexagonal Norman towers guard the entrance gateway: they are nearly covered with ivy, which has quite hidden the escutcheon of the Pomeroyes (if there be one, which seems doubtful) over the crown of the arch. To the right runs a curtain wall, terminating in a circular tower known as 'Lady Margaret's Tower.' Here, according to tradition, Lady Eleanor de Pomerai was confined by her sister through jealousy.* Returning to the gateway, there is just over the arch a chamber, which has excited some discussion. Down the middle it is divided by two hexagonal pillars and arches, apparently of late Norman date, and this ecclesiastical feature has led many to assume that it was the chapel. There are two circumstances, however, against this. In the first place, the opening for the portcullis still remains in the stone floor; in the second the windows are mere loopholes. It is, therefore, much more likely to have been the guard-room. Other and smaller guard-rooms are below, and there are small vaulted chambers on either side of the entrance, communicating with the larger apartments by means of steps.

From the gateway another wall runs to the left, ending in a ruinous tower. Of the remaining walls little remain, but there is enough to show that the castle was quadrangular and of considerable extent. The merest tyro will perceive that the extensive ruins within the walls are of far later date than the old fortress. They are, indeed, the remains of a mansion built in the sixteenth century by Lord Seymour of Sudeley, to whom Protector Somerset granted the estates of Sir Thomas Pomeroy, confiscated owing to his taking part in the Western Rebellion of 1549. Prince says that the erection of this building cost

* I am quite aware that this does not explain why the tower bears the name of Lady *Margaret*, but such is the story.

£20,000, but that it was never finished, the western side not even begun. He describes with great gusto the walk before the Great Hall, 'arched over with curiously-carved freestone of great dimensions, after the Corinthian order, standing on pedestals, having cornices and friezes finely wrought.' He enlarges on the elaborate decorations of the apartments and their number, which he says was reported to be so great that it took a servant a whole day to open and shut the windows! He concludes in these pathetic words: 'All this glory lyeth in the dust buried in its own ruins; there being nothing standing but a few broken walls, which seem to mourn their approaching funerals.'

Perhaps the most celebrated lord of this splendid mansion—he was also the last—was Sir Edward Seymour, leader of the Court party in the days of James II. The style he affected was little short of princely, and his pride knew no bounds. Representing the elder branch of the family, he considered himself far superior to the Duke of Somerset, the head of the younger branch. 'I believe you are of the family of the Duke of Somerset,' said William of Orange when Sir Edward met him after his landing. 'Pardon me, sir,' Sir Edward made answer, 'the Duke of Somerset is of *my* family.'

The destroyer of his mansion was neither war nor time, but fire, in the form, it is said, of lightning. Its traces are still apparent.

It is difficult to get a good general view of the castle. Not only the combe, on the brink of which it stands, is wooded, but the hills are covered too, and with trees of many kinds.

'There rears the ash his airy crest,
And the beech in her glittering leaves is drest,
And dark between shows the oak's proud breast,
Like a chieftain's tower of strength.'

Perhaps the best view is that from above the quarry, approached by a path to the right of the gateway; but

even that is somewhat interfered with by the masses of foliage. For the same reason the view *from* the Castle is confined. Were a few trees felled the visitor would have a most beautiful panorama, somewhat similar to that which I just now attempted to describe; far finer than that from the mouldering walls of the castle of Okehampton on the other side of the moor, for the latter is so under its flanks that nothing can be seen but the valley immediately beneath, and the great slopes almost at a stone's throw opposite.

This castle of Berry Pomeroy, with the keep of Totnes, 'kept watch over the district between Exeter and the Tamar, and especially overlooked the Totnes shore, at that time the principal station from which English ships departed for the lesser Britain.* And a fine time the lords of Pomerai and Totnes had of it.

'The good old rule
Sufficed them: the simple plan
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.'

Doubtless the Pomeroyes did pretty much as they liked, and were little called to account, so long as they were loyal. But they were turbulent subjects, those Norman nobles. Notwithstanding the generosity of the Conqueror (with other men's lands), and his present to Ralph of fifty-eight lordships, his descendant, Henry de Pomerai, had to be banished to Normandy by Cœur de Lion. He returned without leave, was fined, and promptly went over to the traitor, Prince John, fortified his castle, and otherwise made himself obnoxious to the King. His son was rewarded by John with the governorship of Exeter Castle and the shrievalty of Devon, but even *he* could not keep faithful, and joined the Barons. Later another Pomeroy went over to Simon de Montfort, and was one of the many miraculously (?) cured while praying at 'the good

* R. J. King's 'Dartmoor Forest and its Borders.'

Earl's' shrine.* It is no wonder, then, that the lands of Berry Pomeroy underwent many a confiscation, always to be restored, till, in the Rebellion of 1549, the Pomeroy found that they had a grasping Protector instead of a King to deal with, and the property passed away from them for ever.

Most of these old castles have a story attaching to them, and Berry Pomeroy is no exception. A Totnes workman thrice dreamt that he saw an iron pot full of gold in one of the chimneys. Thinking that there was 'something in it,' he set out, though a violent storm was raging, for the castle; but on the way met a local apothecary, who stopped him, and inquired whither he was bound on so tempestuous a night. The man related his dream, which the apothecary pooh-poohed, advising him to make his search next morning. The poor fellow took his advice, and early on the day following hastened to the chimney. He recognised the exact spot which he had seen in his dream, at once put his hand into the cavity, and found it—empty. The 'pot' was gone, but on the ground were some scraps of mortar lately disturbed. Of course suspicion fell on the apothecary, particularly as the latter suddenly rose from indifferent to wealthy circumstances. But the man of medicine kept his own counsel, and so the story ends.†

* 'Dartmoor Forest and its Borders.'

† *Trans. Dev. Ass.*, vol. xi.: 'Collectanea Curiosa Devoniensa,' by P. Q. Karkeek.

CHAPTER VII

FROM TOTNES TO DART HEAD.

Dartington Hall—Staverton Bridge—Staverton—Buckfastleigh Church—Buckfast Abbey—A Ghost Story—Henbury—Holne—Holne Bridge and Chase—Buckland Drives—Buckland in the Moor—The Webburn—The Gorge beneath Bench Tor—The ‘Cry’ of the Dart—Corndon and Yar Tors—Dartmeet—The Story of Snails’ House—Bellafield ‘Clapper’ Bridge—Bellafield Farm—Postbridge—An Amusing Visitors’ Book—Broad Down—Sandy Hole—Dart Head—Cranmere Pool—West Dart—Wistman’s Wood—Crockern Tor—Two Bridges—Glen of the Cowsic—Dunnabridge—Hexworthy.

‘Now let me trace the stream up to its source
Among the hills ; its runnel by degrees
Diminishing, the murmur turns a tinkle,
Closer and closer still the banks approach.’

GRAHAME.

FROM Totnes railway station there is a very pleasant ramble to Dartington, the next village on—or rather near—the Dart. For nearly a mile we follow the Ashburton Road, and then turn down a lane to the right into a dingle, through which a swift stream hurries to join the river. From this stream a rough path takes us up through the wood into some fields, mounting which—for it is uphill work—we again reach a lane leading to Dartington Hall, home of the Champernownes. The mansion is large and rambling, and retains no visible portions of the building (if there were one) erected by its first lord, William de Falaise, of course a friend of Norman William. At one side is the Early English tower of the old church, the only

piece left standing. The new church, which we shall reach presently, is a mile away.

The house immediately preceding the present one was built by John Holland, Duke of Exeter, half-brother of Richard II. Of his day, too, is the great Hall, commonly called the Hall of Knights, a large roofless building with an entrance tower at the side. The porch has a groined roof with bosses, one of which bears the white hart, the badge of Richard. The windows, inserted at a later date—possibly about the time when the existing mansion, which dates from the reign of Elizabeth, was erected—are unglazed. Altogether the building, which is shrouded in ivy, has a look of melancholy stateliness. It is the oldest part of the buildings, unless the stables, which some regard as still older, have the advantage. And it is not impossible that the domestic buildings of the quadrangle are rivals. However, all this I am not architect enough to determine. It is quite evident that the greater part of the existing buildings was not intended as a residence for the lord. 'Most of the structure seems to have been intended either for farm buildings on a very large scale, or as a sort of barracks for retainers, and the history would seem rather to indicate the latter.' The present 'squire' lives at one end of the buildings—of course the mansion part, which is comparatively modern—and a farmer occupies the other, which, although it seems to us nowadays rather a curious arrangement, perhaps perpetuates the custom of olden times.

Dartington has quite a celebrated garden laid out in the Italian style, or, as Mr. J. A. Blaikie calls it, 'the Elizabethan popularly regarded as Italian. Terraces surround it, and it is full of spacious and courtly serenity, and the august tone of the heroic age in which it originated. Here, doubtless, the ladies of "great Eliza's reign" paraded with much sway of hoop and bravery of ruff and farthingale, attended by gallants whose discourse was Sidneian,

echoes of Penshurst, and the "Arcadia," seasoned perhaps with Latin, "after the school of Stratford o' the Bow, for Lillie's Latin was to them unknowe." Spanish aggression and the New World with its fabulous wealth and mystery, stimulated them with the fine sense of discovery and novelty which is hard to realize now in the Old-World forsaken aspect of the place.'

Vegetation about Dartington Hall is luxuriant. The trees are fine, the most interesting being the ancient yews. Everywhere are ferns, even in the masonry. I saw quite a mass of delicate fronds growing in an archway of the farm buildings. Below the hill on which the house stands the Dart rolls on, a bright, merry flood, towards Totnes. There are no tidal waters as far up as this—salt water cannot come beyond the weir at Totnes—and, like all Dartmoor rivers, the Dart even now has a semi-moorland air about it, though there are no rushing cascades yet, no great gray boulders as earnest of what is to come a few miles higher up.

On the other side of the hill a delightfully shady lane leads down to the Rectory, a picturesque building far more ancient than the church, which rises close by. The latter is, indeed, quite new, and is as handsome a structure as any parish need boast, though it seems a pity that Early English arcades should be lighted by Perpendicular windows. The tower is very ornate, with many pinnacles; under the centre ones are niches, each containing a large figure.

A good deal of the woodwork of the old church has found its way here, notably a finely-carved oak screen, a pulpit, and divers bench ends. The door, which contrasts oddly with the spick-and-span stonework, is also evidently the one which admitted worshippers to the church by the Hall; and the font, of Beer or some other light stone, with a clumsy *granite* top, has evidently seen more baptisms above the hill than below it.

The road winds onward, now up, now down, to another descent, and we again strike the Dart at Staverton Bridge, a hoary structure of seven arches with the usual sharp piers, ready for the freshet that may come down at any moment. The river at this spot, deep in one place and shallow in another, flows between meadows and wooded slopes, and tall trees, mirrored in the water, which looks pleasantly cool this hot summer's day, mingle with the reflection of the bridge. Up-stream the prospect is bounded by the green cultivated hills towards Buckfastleigh—round knoll-like hills, where there are pastures and orchards, hills that are quite a feature of this part of the Dart valley, so regularly do they succeed one another, with a white farmhouse or thatched cottage lying peacefully in the combes between. Far down-stream we cannot see, for the river makes a great bend, but the scenery is of quieter order. There are not many signs of human life visible, though the railway, it is true, closely hugs the left bank of the river, and there is the little roadside station almost at the end of the bridge. But between the advent of the unfrequent trains that serve the sleepy town of Ashburton quiet reigns, and there is not much beyond the humming of the mill—not at all an idyllic one—and the appearance of a cottage or two near where Staverton village lies, to remind you that even here life flows on side by side with the river.

Staverton is not a very picturesque village, and it would be scarcely worth while to deviate—though but a little—from the route to visit it, were it not for the church, a handsome Decorated building with an unusually complete screen extending the whole breadth of the building. I say unusually because I only know of one other in Devonshire with the roodloft remaining, though it must be admitted that most of it has been restored. There is another peculiarity about this church. On the *outside* of the wall, under the south window of the chancel, is a

brass incise with the half figure of one John Rowe, son and heir to Serjeant Rowe. The 'tumulus' referred to in the inscription, which is in Latin, and dated 1592, has disappeared, or at any rate is not beneath the brass as there recorded.

And now for five miles and more we follow the river closely, the road winding along the slope above nearly all the way to the church of Buckfastleigh, which appears rather suddenly as we reach the summit of a slight 'knap.' It stands in a commanding position on a hill-top, round which the Dart sweeps in swift and broken current. Austin's Bridge, nearly covered with ivy, spans the river in the foreground; crossing this we reach the foot of the steep ascent to the church.

Perhaps I should have said ascents, for there are more than one or two to this high-perched church. They are all toilsome enough, but the climb from the town carries the palm; you have to mount no less than a hundred and ninety-five steps—a pleasant task in wet weather, and they get plenty of it at Buckfastleigh.

Of the former church of Buckfastleigh—for such I suppose it to be, though history seems silent about it—only a fragment remains at the east end of the churchyard. The present building is large and roomy, with an Early English chancel and arcade, though the windows are in the main Perpendicular. In shape it is cruciform, and it boasts the only spire for miles. The most ancient thing about it is the heavily-carved Norman font, which deserves a more conspicuous position than that at present accorded it. It is a massive and curious piece of work. In the churchyard are two very ugly objects which none can avoid seeing if they wish; one is a sepulchre house, the other a coffin carved out of solid granite, an ornament (?) to a grave near the south door.

Happily for the Dart the town of Buckfastleigh is on the further side of the hill. This town, 'with which fallen



J. D. M. Pagan del.

The Dart near Buckfastleigh.

St. Andrew, 1847.



man (by some strange perversity) has chosen to defile one of the loveliest sites in the pleasant land of Devon,* is as ugly a place as any in Devonshire. So we will pass it by, and descending by one of the narrow lanes and passing beneath the marble quarries which give the hill, on this side, so precipitous an appearance, get into the road which leads to the abbey of Buckfast, the refuge for a colony of French Benedictines.

The history of this abbey is curious. According to tradition, it was of Saxon origin. 'Duke Alfred' (whoever he may have been) founded it, and Canute was a benefactor. The first monks—like the present occupants—were of the Benedictine order. This must have been one of the earliest establishments of that order in England, as Dunstan did not introduce it till 944. Either they did not flourish, or—being Saxons—were turned out by the arrogant Norman, for in 1137 Ethelward de Pomeroy placed the abbey, which he rebuilt, in possession of Cistercians. It seems to have flourished well enough till the day when

'Bluff Harry broke into the spence
And turned the cows adrift.'

Then, as years went on, it lapsed into ruin. A good deal of it went into the walls of the mansion erected within the precincts, more into the walls of the woollen factory hard by. Little is now left but the Abbot's Tower and the foundations lately laid bare by the new occupants.

History repeats itself. Here are the Benedictines again rebuilding the edifice on the lines of the foundations, and in the style of the second abbey, which they conclude to have been a somewhat severe Norman. The parts completed are the cloisters, refectory, kitchen, and dormitory. A temporary chapel has been erected adjoining the Abbot's Tower, or 'lodging,' which has been repaired and adorned

* Kingsley wrote these words of Okehampton, a town far less deserving of such censure than Buckfastleigh.

with an immense gargoyle of a monk holding a water-jar, through which, in rainy weather, the water spouts from the leads. Some day, they say, they hope to rebuild the church. The colony consists of about forty members. French, German, and English are the nationalities represented, but the former naturally predominate, and everyone must consent to learn the French language.

Connected with the neighbourhood of Buckfastleigh is a marvellous ghost story. I have open before me at this moment a copy of a letter written by one of the ladies who saw the strange occurrence I am about to relate, and, whatever sceptics may think, there can be no doubt from the language employed that she really saw, or was under the impression that she saw, a very ghostly sight indeed. One day this lady, accompanied by her two sisters, was returning home with their father, who had been shooting. By some means they contrived to miss him and lost their way. After walking some time they saw—very much to their satisfaction—a light which they found proceeded from a cottage by the roadside. Looking through the window, they beheld, seated on a bench, crouching over the fire, an old man and woman. ‘We looked for a little while, and then all of a sudden we were left in perfect darkness, and cottage, man, and woman all disappeared. We *never* moved from where we were standing.’ The ladies—they were quite girls—were naturally ‘rather frightened,’ and when they reached home at once made inquiries about this vanishing cottage. It does not appear that they got much information from the villagers, —‘Yes, it is quite right, it is called the Phantom Cottage of the Moor,’ and a rather hazy idea of some tale of wicked deeds connected with the cottage and its inhabitants being nearly all that they could gather. The Devonshire peasant is not, as a rule, communicative about matters supernatural, and it was the case here. The ladies and their father visited the spot by daylight, but found nothing

but a few stones apparently marking the site of this 'phantom cottage.' I may mention that I have made efforts to see this ghostly appearance myself, but unfortunately, owing to a misdirection, I never reached the spot in question. However, fortune may favour me yet, and if it does, you, my readers, shall have the tale, plain and unvarnished. If it does not, I make a present of the above facts to the Psychical or any other society whose members interest themselves in investigating matters uncanny.*

Beautiful as is the Dart everywhere, it is nowhere so beautiful as about Dartmoor. Some three miles above Buckfastleigh, if you follow the upland road, a scene of great sylvan loveliness is reached at the ancient hill fort of Henbury Castle. The hill on which this earthwork stands is covered with oak coppice right down to the water. Around it the river flows onward to Buckfast Abbey, now hidden by intervening foliage, though the spire of the church stands out plainly against the sky. Across the stream the ground rises and rises, until, from another wooded hill, Auswell Rock projects above the trees.† Beyond that, again, is Buckland Beacon and other Dartmoor heights, while behind stretch the billowy moorlands at the back of Holne village, unbroken by tor, and relieved only from monotony by some lonely grave crowning the higher ridges.

But the prevailing characteristic is foliage. Whether you look up or down the Dart Valley, woods either in solid bulk of oak coppice or in detached patches of larger timber meet the eye. There are fields, too, bright squares of verdure among the darker green. Of course, autumn is the time to look down from the mounds of Henbury.

* The scene of the apparition was not far from Hayford Hall, three and a half miles from Buckfastleigh.

† Also called Hazel Tor (evidently a corruption of Auswell), and Lion Rock, from its supposed resemblance to that animal.

Then the russet of the oak is varied by the death-flame of the sycamore, and both by the golden crown of some stately elm or by the dark gleam of the hollies in Holne Chase. And through all this, two or three hundred feet below—or, for aught I can tell, even more—in and out winds the Dart, a line of blue, broken here and there by boulders each ringed with flecks of foam.

Henbury was a big camp. The double ramparts, now mostly overgrown with coppice, enclose an area of seven acres. A high mound partially concealed by a few oaks represents, it is supposed, the *prætorium*, though whether the camp was Roman is more than doubtful. And Henbury has a strange legend. It is said that the Danes once occupied the earthwork, and that no efforts of the Wessex men could dislodge them. So the women came to the rescue. A party of them placed themselves in the path of the marauders, and were at once carried off to Henbury. In due course the Danes retired to rest. The ladies waited till their lovers were asleep, and then quietly cut their throats. Before this cold-blooded performance, the deed of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, sinks into insignificance.

Near Henbury Castle is Holne, birthplace of Charles Kingsley, who was born at the vicarage. The little old church has an oak screen, said to be the work of Buckfast monks, and a pulpit, but is not otherwise remarkable. Holne is almost a moorland village, high placed and breezy, a long way above the river, and commanding fine views of the surrounding country.

But the scenery of this part of the Dart Valley is so remarkable that a nearer inspection must be made if you would fully appreciate its romance, for no other word will express the nature of the country bordering the great horseshoe—four miles from point to point—which the river makes between New Bridge and Holne Bridge, where the highroad from Ashburton to Princetown first reaches the river.

Get down, to begin with, to this latter bridge, 'perhaps the most characteristic of all' spanning the wild Dart. There are three gray arches mantled in ivy, the central one loftier than usual, for it bridges a deep rocky channel only a few feet across, and dark with shadowing foliage. The high ground above, a hill rising in the midst of the valley, is Holne Chase, and it is about this obstruction to its course, that the river forms the horseshoe I have mentioned. It is more or less wooded, and its hollies are supposed to have given it the name of Holne.* However this may be, it is a fine bold hill, though, owing to its position between heights of greater elevation, it is not so impressive as it would be if placed in a country more level.

In the woods opposite to Holne Chase, immediately across the river, are the famous Buckland Drives, the first thing which the tourist to Ashburton hurries to visit. There is an upper and a lower entrance, the former at some distance along the road to Ashburton, the latter close to Holne Bridge. As we are at the bridge, we will follow the lower drive, at first keeping close to the river, but presently rising through the woods to where the road cuts through a mass of rock called the Lover's Leap, overhanging the brawling river. The name is suicidal, and they tell you that a pair of desperate lovers actually did cast themselves into the pool below, but as no one seems to know who they were, I, for one, venture to doubt the story. But the scene is romantic enough, and the view of the glen with the river foaming below, and the steepes of the Chase rising opposite, is one not to be forgotten. And from the upper part of the drive is a finer view still, for the prospect is much more extensive, and at many openings there are vistas in every direction, save where, to the eastward, Buckland Beacon and Auswell Rock rise high against the sky.

* Saxon *holeyn* = a holly tree.

Beyond the bend in the road a lane branches up to the village of Buckland-in-the-Moor, a few houses perched on the hillside, though scarcely so 'moory' as its name would imply. Indeed, there are fields all round it, and the tall sycamores about the gray tower of the church could never exist on the bleak heights of Dartmoor. On the opposite hill, across the stream of the Webburn, stands the modern church of Lensdon.

This Webburn is sadly discoloured—it even affects the Dart—by the water coming down from Golden Dagger Mine, near its source, but the valley is almost as fine as that of the Dart. And it certainly has more rock. The road at the back of the lodge, close to its confluence with the Dart, climbs the hillside, sometimes three or four hundred feet above the bottom of the narrow glen down which it hurries to the larger stream. In about a mile and a half the East Webburn is seen, clear as crystal (for there are no mine workings about Hethercombe, where it takes its birth), coming down a side glen. If you cross this and follow the main stream for another half-hour, you will reach the hamlet of Ponsworthy, a snug little settlement between the hills on the road from Ashburton to Widecombe-in-the-Moor.

Descending from Buckland, we cross the Webburn, and wind along the banks of our river to New Bridge, which is at the very foot of Dartmoor, where, of course, cultivation practically comes to an end. For the poor-looking 'newtakes,' as they call the moor enclosures, are barren indeed after the fertile meads which we are leaving. Henceforth for many a mile we shall be surrounded by dusky moorland, by tor and rock, by moss and heather, with no sound but the voice of the waters or the rare cry of a bird.

Instead of following the windings of the road, we will take a short-cut and face the steep slope of the rough hill that rises over against Newbridge. It is a climb stiff

enough to excuse many a pause, giving opportunity to look back over the valley below—the great wooded amphitheatre round which the river (though for the most part invisible) makes its way towards the low country. The stranger slowly climbing this ascent will, perhaps, regret that he is leaving all this fine scenery behind for a succession of—as he imagines—more or less dreary uplands. The moorside is certainly in itself dull enough, and he may well be pardoned if he does indulge in such a feeling. There is nothing whatever to foreshadow what is coming, and how can he be expected to know that the summit of this down commands a scene of such wild grandeur as will not, I think, be found south of the dales of Westmoreland? I can still recall my own feelings of wonder when my eyes first rested on the deep ravine through which Dart leaves the moor. And this is what I suddenly came upon :

A deep gorge, how deep I cannot tell, but certainly 400 feet, bounded on one side by the flank of Bel Tor (where enthusiasts say that the Druids once worshipped Belus or Baal), a grassy glacis strewn with rock, and beyond closed by the slope of conical Sharp Tor, a mountain in miniature ; on the other by the precipices of Bench Tor, rising from a declivity covered with dwarf oak and mountain ash that see little sunshine after noonday, so completely are they overshadowed by the granite masses. At the bottom foams the Dart, apparently little more than a torrent, but really nearly 100 feet across. Its ‘cry’ rising from the depths has an eerie sound, especially impressive at nightfall.* Looking up the glen beyond

* The moorfolk treat the Dart as something almost human. *The Dart* you seldom hear : it is ‘*Dart* came down last night’—‘*Dart* is crying.’ An old man on Corndon Tor (with whom the author named below had gone to see the ‘sun dance’ on Easter morning) remarked : ‘Maister, we shall have a change ; I hear the Broadstones crying, or else ‘tis Jordan Ball.’ The Broadstones are in the bed of the Dart, and Jordan Ball is near. The ‘crying’ of the Dart foretells rain.—R. J. King, *Trans. Dev. Assoc.*, vol. viii., ‘Folk Lore.’

Sharp Tor there is a glimpse of far-away moorland bathed in yellow sunlight, in strong contrast to the tors near at hand, over which a dark cloud shadow is slowly moving, turning them into piles grim and forbidding.

It is a rough scramble along Dartside now, and the everlasting din of the waters is after awhile rather depressing; for the river is ever at war with the great boulders that strew its channel, and there are all sorts of white cascades and dark dangerous-looking slides over and between the ledges. Most people will prefer taking the highroad which runs above it across elevated ground eleven hundred feet and more above the sea. On the right rises Corndon Tor, where there is an immense cairn, and beyond it Yar Tor, which has for its summit another cairn, and a crown of rocks forming, as Rowe remarks, a sort of natural fortification. As likely as not it was at one time a refuge for some wild clan of Celts, for the rock-strewn slope below is marked with hut-circles, the basements of what was once, perhaps, a British town. I say *perhaps*, for there is nothing to prove that they were not the dwellings of the mining population, relics of whose occupation are not far distant.

Still, I suppose, we may take it that the lonely grave between Corndon and Yar Tors, a little to the left of the road to Cator—a ruined kistvaen, surrounded by a circle of granite slabs—marks the spot where some great man among the Damnonii was laid in what his clan, with happy ignorance of future despoilers, deemed his last resting-place.

The road soon drops to Dartmeet, where the East Dart comes sweeping round the flank of Yar Tor to join the river which henceforth becomes the West Dart. This eastern fork of the river is a fine stream, and rapid withal—so rapid, indeed, that many years ago it swept away an old ‘clapper’ bridge, probably built by the inhabitants of the settlement on Yar Tor, and which had

for centuries withstood its violence. But the river has still left two specimens of these interesting structures. Four miles above the point where Dartmeet Bridge spans its flood—under Bellaford Tor—you will find another clapper; and yet another, the finest on the moor, two miles or so higher, at the hamlet of Postbridge. As I have already fully described these bridges,* I shall say nothing further about them except that the one at Dartmeet has actually been *rebuilt* by the Dartmoor Preservation Association. On the subject of the restoration of these ancient relics, I am so thoroughly at one with Mr. Crossing (himself, I believe, a member of the association), that I cannot refrain from quoting his very sensible remarks *in extenso*: 'The Dartmoor Preservation Association, it is stated, are contemplating the restoration of these fallen bridges on the moor. While I will yield to none in my desire to see all our old monuments preserved, I am wishful to see their restoration effected only where such can *truly* be carried out. I cannot say that I view this proposal with feelings of any great satisfaction. That I admire such an act as the replacing of the stone on the clapper at Postbridge it is unnecessary for me to say, because in such an instance we know that the restoration is proceeding on correct lines; and if the stones that have been taken away from the one at Bellaford could be found, and their positions determined, I should rejoice at seeing them placed once more upon the piers. But if an attempt be made to re-erect those which have been swept away by the floods, I am afraid that nothing which the antiquary will be able to point to with pride will be accomplished. Of what possible interest could the building of a clapper bridge at Dartmeet be to anybody now? The stones which compose the old bridge are nearly all swept into the river, and no one can tell what their original positions in the structure were. If it is restored,

* *Vide* 'An Exploration of Dartmoor and its Antiquities.'

the utmost that can be said will be that a new bridge has been built on the site and from the materials of an old one. Far better that those that have been spared to us, and which possess a real interest, should be well cared for, and by the exercise of suitable precautions guarded against the hand of the vandal and the encroachments of Time, so that posterity may be able to thank us for handing down to them a real relic of antiquity, and not a sham.*

The point whether the East or West Dart is to be considered the main stream seems settled by Dart *Head* being placed at the springs of the former. We will therefore first follow this branch of the stream, a rough-and-ready scramble, for there is no road; indeed, roads on Dartmoor at all are, 'like angels' visits, few and far between.' There is hardly so much as a track between Dartmeet and Postbridge.

The best part of the valley is about Brimpts and Yar Tor, the woods of the former contrasting well with the rough slopes of the mountain. Just beyond Yar Tor the Wallabrook comes in on the right below the moor farm of Baveney, and a little further up across the river we see the low rocks of Lough Tor, or, as the 'bye-dwellers,' who have a way of repeating a word very puzzling to the casual wanderer, call it, Lougher Tor. The view looking up-stream is nothing, but, looking back, Yar Tor stands forth majestic, with a bit of Dartmeet Hill behind, against which rise the fir-trees of the Brimpts plantations.

On the slope below Lough Tor is the small homestead known as Lough Tor 'Hall,' and a little above it on our side of the river appear some ruins, those of the lesser building being the remains of a cottage once known as White Slade, but now going by the name of Snails' House. This odd name is, according to Mr. Crossing,† due to the following occurrence: In this cottage dwelt

* 'Amid Devonia's Alps,' p. 83.

† *Ibid.*, p. 80.

two spinsters, who, though 'fat and well-liking,' appeared to have 'no visible means of subsistence.' No food was ever seen to enter their door. Dark suspicions arose. How, asked the neighbours, did these ladies live? Perchance, it was whispered, their meat was Dartmoor mutton, unlawfully acquired, and brought to the house under cover of darkness. The matter must be inquired into. So a posse of moor-folk visited the house, and, strange to say, were willingly admitted. For a time nothing eatable could be found; but presently there was a cry of triumph—certain pans were discovered, and excitedly dragged forward. But what a disappointment! They were full of *salted slugs*! And now comes the curious part of the story. For some occult cause the spinsters never throve after. Whether the strange provender 'lost its virtue, or they lost their appetite, is not known'; but their 'plump appearance soon became a thing of the past, and they gradually pined away until there were no more miserable-looking beings upon the moor.'

And now up a side valley we see the shapely form of Bellaford Tor, and soon after come upon the ruinous clapper bridge, the restoration of which is, or was, contemplated by the Dartmoor Preservation Association. The length from bank to bank is about forty feet, and there are three openings. Formerly there were six very massive slabs, about twelve feet long and from fifteen inches to two feet in thickness, laid in couples side by side from pier to pier. Now only two remain—one at each end—so that the central opening is altogether unspanned. Consequently four slabs will be required before the structure is again *in statu quo*, which I hope it never will be, as such restoration is not only unnecessary with a modern bridge a few feet above, but will go far towards destroying, or at any rate impairing, the charm of this hoar relic of antiquity.

The moor farm close at hand—called, after the tor above it, Bellaford Farm—is, according to Rowe, author of the ‘Perambulation,’ one of the oldest homesteads within the forest. It is also one of the most picturesque actually *on* the moor, and compares favourably with grandly-named but cottage-like Lough Tor Hall, the only building between it and Baveney.

In two miles more the clapper bridge at Postbridge comes into view. This is very much larger than the one at Bellaford, though with the same number of openings. It is nearly fifty feet long, and the slabs which formed the ancient roadway are wider and longer, if not so thick. Across the middle opening there are two laid side by side, but the other openings are each bridged by one only. These single slabs (and there appear never to have been more) are the largest; they are fifteen feet in length, seven in width, and about a foot in thickness, and a surveyor estimated the weight for me at nearly eight tons apiece. One cannot help wondering how in the early days when this bridge was built—whenever that may have been—the architect contrived to get so heavy a stone into position. The bridge is no longer used; as at Bellaford, a modern structure is close at hand, the bridge carrying the highroad from Tavistock to Moretonhampstead.

One of the centre slabs lay, not many years since, in the bed of the river. Its fall was the result, not of accident, but of design. It appears to have occurred to the mind of one of the natives of Postbridge hamlet what a fine *duck-pond* might be made by turning the bridge into a dam, thus blocking the current of the river. He commenced operations by tipping one of the two smaller slabs into the water; but it perversely fell on its face instead of on its edge, and the plan was abandoned.*

This is only one instance of the Dartmoor cottar’s

* W. Crossing, ‘Amid Devon’s Alps.’

taste for vandalism. At Bellaford the bridge was spoilt for fun (?), though I do not at this moment recollect any other instance of *wanton* mischief. Still, it is notorious that the moor farmer will help himself to anything 'handy,' with scant regard to archæology or anything else. If he is piling a wall, and an avenue or pound happens to be near, he calmly appropriates as much as suits his fancy, while an old cross or the doorpost of a hut-circle comes in uncommonly useful for hanging his gate upon. There can be no doubt that if the full amount of spoliation of 'rude-stone remains' that has gone on upon this moor were known, it would cause the cheek of any properly-constituted antiquary to pale, and his breast to swell with righteous indignation. It is to be hoped that the efforts of the Preservation Association will prove some check upon these depredators; but the idea that antiquities were placed on Dartmoor for their use is too deeply engrained in the mind agricultural for one to entertain much hope.

There is nothing very interesting about the hamlet of Postbridge. This little moorland settlement, the only place of any size between Princetown and Moretonhampstead, consists of half a dozen scattered cottages, an Episcopal chapel served by the curate from Princetown, a humble Nonconformist place of worship, and a snug little temperance inn. Right and left the long white road stretches over the undulations of the moor, sheltered opposite the cottages by a line of wind-tossed beeches. Little traffic is seen on this road save in the months of summer, when brakes and other vehicles containing visitors at Princetown, Two Bridges, and Moreton, disturb its solitude; while now and again a brace of pedestrians, their knapsacks swinging on a walking-stick between them, pass by with steady plod.

What one would do at Postbridge Inn of an evening without a 'visitors' book,' I shudder to think. I confess

to a weakness for these repositories. What if they *are* full of inane poetry, bad composition, and worse grammar; they still have variety, and variety, we are told, is charming, though why so many of the contributors should think it necessary to inform the world what they had for dinner, and how they enjoyed the same, I cannot imagine. In this Postbridge volume one gentleman puts his praises into verse, and after expressing the satisfaction he felt at the dissection, and we hope digestion, of a fowl, finishes thus :

‘ Let the stately swells go on,
To their dinners à la mode;
But oh for the taste of that vanished hen
At the Inn on the Dartmoor road !’—

which, for a visitors’ book, is rather good.

Another person, having possibly drunk too deeply of the poetic delights in its earlier pages, contributes these sensible lines :

‘ Let others climb Parnassus’ slope
By means of metaphor and trope,
With Pegasus for hack :
Ne sutor ultra crepidam,
A plain unlettered man I am,
Who’s had a pleasant vac.’

What a pity that some other cobblers do not stick to their lasts !

But the prose is more entertaining still, and particularly the comments that succeeding travellers have freely pencilled in the margin. The sportsman is very rudely treated indeed. The trout-fisher who bewails the weather and the water is gravely informed that failure is possibly due to his own want of skill; while the fowler who slew, according to his own account, a phenomenal number of snipe, is warned that ‘all liars shall have their portion,’ etc. And so forth.

And now the Dart has become a small stream, and perhaps beyond Postbridge few will care to wander, for the upper waters flow through a dreary wilderness.

Those, however, who wish to follow the lessening stream as he 'fleeteth through the moors with a long solitarie course,' will find a pathway on the western bank which will conduct them past Hartland Tor and the cottage where poor old Jonas Coaker, the 'Dartmoor poet,' ended his days, to the bold slope of Broad Down. This hill is worth ascending, as it commands a good view down the valley, and boasts also the remains of antiquity in the shape of a ruinous pound enclosing hut-circles. This interesting relic has been much mutilated by our friend the farmer, who has not only helped himself largely to stones for his newtake wall, but has actually incorporated part of the pound wholesale.

From the top of Broad Down you will get as good an idea as from any point I know of the contrasts in a Dartmoor landscape. Look, first of all, south. There is the gleaming line of the Dart winding past Postbridge towards Bellaford, down a valley which, if not highly cultivated, still bears a good many marks of man's presence. Beyond, a soft blue-gray, rise the mountainous forms of Yar and Corndon Tors, with the rocky crest of Bellaford—or, as the moor-folk call it, *Bellever* Tor—nearer at hand on the right. Away to the south-east is Buckland Beacon, rising above the beautiful 'drives,' and not far distant from it the peak of Rippon Tor.

Now turn about and look northward. What do you see? A barren waste of hills, without summit, undefined, almost shapeless. And yet the elevations are far loftier than those of the bolder tors southward. But they do not give the idea of much height, and one is almost startled to find on looking at the map that that dreary bog-riven height called Cut Hill is only nineteen feet short of two thousand. Let us descend again to the river, getting, through an opening in the downs eastward, a peep at Kes Tor, near Chagford, the last tor—save a glimpse at Rippon far down the valley—which we shall see for miles.

Above Broad Down the Dart, falling over some ledges of rock, makes a cascade; in flood-time quite an imposing spectacle, though in dry weather the great slabs and boulders bleach in the sun. Then onwards and upwards between steep and rocky slopes until a kind of amphitheatre is reached. Here there is evidence in plenty that even in that remote spot the miner 'streamed' for tin. For, just above it, advantage has been taken of a little rocky pass through which Dart makes his way to further confine the stream within rude granite walls. The hollow is known as Sandy Hole, 'from the quantity of sand which is washed up from the banks of the stream.'* It is a desolate spot, and on the western slope the snow lingers long. I have found a drift here in April long after it had disappeared from the surrounding moor.

Above the pass is Broad Marsh, through which the river meanders from the heavy bogland near Cut Hill. Here again the 'old men' have been at work, and mounds of mining débris, of course for ages overgrown with heather, border the stream. As you press onwards, the Dart dwindles and dwindles until presently you may take it in your stride. For the last few hundred yards it is concealed by rushes, though its course can still be traced by a brown stain, the marks of the flood. Soon you hear the 'cry' no more—not even a whisper—the rushes come to an end, and you stop before a tiny pool not much bigger than a washhand-basin. This is Dart Head.

Little can be said for the surroundings. All this part of Dartmoor is gloomy and desolate in the extreme.

'Nothing that has life
Is visible ;—no solitary flock
At will wide ranging through the silent moor
Breaks the deep-felt monotony ; and all
Is motionless, save where the giant shades,
Flung by the passing cloud glides swiftly o'er
The gray and gloomy wild.'

* 'Amid Devon's Alps.'

In this picture there is no exaggeration. Save in the hollow where the river trickles, there is little ground that is not in wet weather bog. And not even smooth bog, for the dull slopes stretching up from the river are scarred with miniature crevices filled with soft black uncompromising peat that will support naught but the smallest animal, and the human being must jump from one tussock of coarse grass to another. And there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of acres of this horrible morass.

Less than a mile from the little hollow where the Dart takes its birth, the Taw rises, travelling in an exactly opposite direction towards the Bristol Channel. The Tavy, the Teign, and the Ockment are also close at hand, so that the morass is the 'mother of manie rivers.' In days of yore, most, if not all, were said to flow from Cranmere Pool, once a small tarn, but now a mere puddle—in summer, indeed, nothing but a depression of black peat. An active man *can* get at this 'pool' from Dart Head; but I do not recommend him to try, for the walking, or rather springing and plunging, is about the worst in England. Cranmere is 1,842 feet above sea-level, but there is very little view from it except of the eternal bog, and it is the most desolate place I have ever seen. The silence is almost painful, and you may wait half the day without hearing even the chirp of the ubiquitous stone-chat. Still, it is a place to be seen, if only for its inaccessibility and utter loneliness; and the tin canister buried within the little cairn on its margin contains the names of several bold tourists who have traversed the spongy ground and succeeded in reaching it. Some of them have recorded their impressions of the spot in more or less villainous verse. One, however, does better, and hits off rather happily the principal characteristics of Dartmoor. If I remember right, it runs as follows:

'An undulating waste of windy hills,
Crowned with gray lichen granite bold and free,
Like rocks upon an angry heaving sea ;
A nursery of cloud and fog, where rills
Are cradled into torrents,
Here from the distance lovingly,
To nourish fairer lands, sweet water trills.'

* * * *

We left the western branch of the Dart at Dartmeet. At Dart Head we are many miles distant from that spot, but quite near to the source of the tributary stream. No one, however, in his senses would undertake the exhausting walk which a bee-line across the bogs would entail, especially when, by returning along the stream he has just descended for some three miles, he can reach the source with comparatively little difficulty. For at the back of Broad Down the rivers approach to within less than a mile of each other, and the piece of moor intervening is very much better going than the sere and rotten ground about Cut Hill.

The West Dart rises amid desolate scenery behind Row Tor; but having once left that eminence behind, it flows down a wild deep valley overlooked on the east by a range of tors—Lower and Higher White Tors, Longaford, the Littaforde Tors and famous Parliament Rock or Crockern Tor. Of these, Longaford Tor is the loftiest. On the western side of the valley rises the great hill of Baredown. This hill also is crested with rock masses; and so abrupt is the hillside, that long ere the sun has sunk to rest the stream below is in shadow, and twilight reigns among the stunted oaks of Wistman's Wood, though the rocky crests above are still bathed in a golden glow.

It is a strange place, this Wistman's Wood. A strange place did I say? It is a weird one, especially about nightfall. Imagine a steep glacis covered with boulders, some bleached by the storms of a thousand years, others mantled thick in moss, these latter owing their green

covering to the shade of a grove of dwarf oaks bent by the moorland blast into every shape conceivable. No monarchs of the forest are they; the tallest cannot be more than a dozen feet in height, while a good many scarcely rise above the stature of a man. Who planted this remarkable wood, the most ancient bit of forest on Dartmoor, is unknown; but a perambulation of the moor made about the time of the Conquest refers to it in terms from which it seems to have presented much the same appearance then as now. And small as are the trees, they one and all bear the marks of hoar antiquity. Some are dead, a good many have been destroyed by a recent fire, all are more or less apparently dying, yet year after year they put forth leaves; year after year the heaps of leaf mould down among the crevices of the boulders grow thicker. The very moss looks as if it had seen the day 'when King Edward was alive and dead,' and waves from the grim dead boughs in melancholy rags and tatters. This is indeed a 'forest primeval,' and though the 'murmuring pines and hemlocks' are wanting, their parasites are not. These oaks

'Bearded with moss and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of old with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar with beards that rest on their bosoms.'

'Like Druids of old'—the words remind me that many of a past generation, and a few even in this, *do* regard Wistman's Wood as a Druidical grove. Wistman is Wiseman, say they; Wistman's Wood is the wood of the wise man, and who should the wise man be but the Druid? The notion is romantic enough, the place is uncanny enough, but is the evidence sufficient? I fear not. Nothing Druidical has ever been found on Dartmoor; I do not think anything Druidical ever will be. The most I can say is that if they ever had a local habitation and a name on these moors, Wistman's Wood may well have been one of their haunts. Think how

easy it would have been to cut the sacred mistletoe. No dangerous and undignified climbing; the priest had only to stretch forth his arm, and the golden sickle could lop off as much of the plant as he willed. That is, if the plant ever grew there. It certainly does not now. But then, since Druidical days are gone, the birds may no longer come from afar for the tit-bits left from sacrifices, and so mistletoe is no more seen in

‘The lonely wood of Wistman.’

Looking up the valley as we emerge once more upon the bare hillside, we shall be struck by the appearance of the rock on the summit of Row Tor. It is exactly like some huge misshapen monster, and viewed in connection with the mysterious wood (especially if we have allowed Druidic romance to sway us) has quite an awful aspect. Perhaps the Druid worshipped it as a rock idol, as he once did (?) Bowerman’s Nose, a curious pile rather like a human figure near Manaton, on the other side of the moor. Ye gods (of the Druids)! fancy

‘This granite god,
To whom in days long flown the knee
In trembling homage bowed,’

bearing such a name—Bowerman’s nose!

But enough of things mythological; we come now to an object with an authentic history. At the very end of the ridge, two miles beyond Wistman’s Wood, is Crockern Tor, the Moot Hill of the tinnerns, where from a period that is lost in the mists of the past up to the middle of the last century the Stannary Parliament was held *sub Jove*. The steps cut in one of the rocks, possibly for seats, are now the only relic on the spot of this open-air court. I say on the spot, for a large slab of granite in the farmyard at Dunnabridge, further down the river, is said to have been the council table, a very rough one, by the way, to write upon. It seems a queer place for an assembly,

this granite-crested hill-top, and must have been decidedly unpleasant in wet weather ; but it had at least the merit of being central, for Parliament Rock is in the very middle of the moor.

The highroad passes beneath the tor, crossing the Dart at Two Bridges, where, however, there is only *one* bridge. Here is a cottage or two, and an inn bearing the singularly inappropriate title of the Saracen's Head. It ought to be the Druid's Head, or at any rate Parliament Inn, with Wistman's Wood and Crockern Tor, so to speak, at its doors. But it is a way inns have. There is a *William Rufus* hotel on Exmoor, and there ought to be a *Red Deer* in the New Forest ; but what's in a name, after all ? Let us not find fault with the sign of our hostelry, provided the fare is decent : and fare of the simplest kind will be grateful after a tramp from Postbridge *vid* Dart Head, a good twenty miles, without seeing a human dwelling, and probably without meeting a human form.

Close to the inn runs the river ; we can hear its babble as we sit at meat. And we can almost hear the more lively tones of the Cowsic—a stream more agreeable than its name—which comes tumbling down a wooded glen across the valley to add its waters to the Dart. This glen is, indeed, a lovely spot, and the trees—for Dartmoor—are quite fine specimens. They were planted within the present century, the wiseacres shaking their heads at the idea of getting trees to grow on Dartmoor. But the situation is sheltered, and they have thriven wonderfully. Above the glen, near Baredown Farm, is another of the clapper bridges, though of proportions far less striking than those at Postbridge and Bellaford. At Two Bridges the road from Tavistock to Ashburton, the other Dartmoor highway, crosses that from Exeter to Plymouth, and follows the river closely to Dartmeet. There is not much to detain us *en route*, though the antiquary will doubtless pause at Dunnabridge Farm to

see the supposed council table and the pound, within which is a granite seat, said to be the judge's chair from Crockern Tor. Although the country is wild enough, there are now attempts at cultivation: newtakes fringe the road divided by walls of loosely-piled granite, dull and uninteresting. Away to the right, perched at the foot of Hisworthy Tor, is the penal settlement of Princetown, which we turn our backs upon with little regret. Across the shallow valley rise dark downs, the watershed of the southern rivers, the Avon, Erme, Yealm and Plym. By-and-by we reach the road turning off to Hexworthy, a hamlet of a farm or two and a few cottages, almost within sight of Dartmeet, and are once more close under Yar Tor, which, from the door of the Forest Inn does, as Mr. Crossing says, 'present a truly noble outline.' Here, if you have not refreshed the inner man at the Saracen's Head, you had better bait, and bait well, for there is no house of call in the direction in which I am going to lead you, nearer than South Brent, which is a good eight miles as the crow flies, and a bad dozen as man walks.

CHAPTER VIII

THROUGH THE SOUTH HAMS: THE AVON AND SALCOMBE 'RIVER.'

Aune Head—Huntingdon Cross—The Abbot's Way—Zeal Cascades—Brent—Brent Hill—Diptford—The Avon Valley—Loddiswell Bridge and Village—Aveton Giffard—Bantham—Borough Island—The Wreck of the *Chanteloupe*—Salcombe 'River'—Kingsbridge and its Legend—Peter Pindar—John Hicks—The Estuary—A Spiteful Epitaph—A Fateful Coin—A Tragedy—Widegates—Salcombe—North Sands—South Sands—Luminous Moss—Bolt Head.

AUNE* HEAD—for so is the source of the Avon named—is a scene of utter desolation. After ascending the downs above Hexworthy, the traveller finds himself on a lofty tableland fifteen hundred feet or more above the sea, almost as dreary, though not quite as boggy, as the district about the springs of the Dart. No tor breaks the sky-line, no 'clatter' even covers the slopes. Away over Holne Ridge, and about Ryder's Hill, are a few tumuli, and that is all. Vegetation there is none, save of the poorest kind—rough grass, bristling rush, scraggy heather.

Yet withal there is an air of grandeur about these moors, desolate, it is true, but still in some inexplicable manner relieving them from monotony. There is a wild sense of freedom, too, in the scene; everything is so fresh, so open, so vast. It is almost like being on the

* Celtic *awn*, water. Lower down the river is called the Avon, another form of the same word; compare the Welsh *afon*.

sea, or, at any rate, like looking upon it, to stand on a ridge a little higher, perhaps, than its fellows, and watch the billowy expanse, now light, now dark, as the cloud shadows, driven by a brisk wind, scud swiftly across the desert.

Out of a tiny pool in the middle of a bog the river trickles, and soon swollen by other rills drawn from the same or neighbouring morasses becomes a fair stream. For two or three miles its course is through a shallow depression which slopes (but so gradually that it is almost level) towards the valleys southward. There is nothing remarkable in the scenery, but the antiquary will find some recompense for the want of variety in examining the traces of ancient mining operations which bound the banks on either hand. It is not until the river tumbles rather suddenly into the rocky bottom by Huntingdon Warren, where the 'feeble folk' do greatly abound, that the surroundings assume that bold rocky character shown by every Dartmoor-born river as it approaches the confines of the moor.

At the lower end of the Warren, close to where the tributary Wellabrook joins the river, is a weather-beaten granite cross. It is only about four feet high, and of shape the rudest. In ancient days it formed one of the bounds of Brent Moor, and, I believe, for the matter of that, does so still. Coming down the hill, almost facing this venerable relic, is a rough path. This is the Abbot's Way, which four or five centuries ago was the route used by the Buckfast monks to convey their wool to Tavistock.* This part of the old bridle-path is perfectly clear, and free from the encroachments of the almost omnipresent heather; indeed, it may be traced with more or less distinctness for some distance over the hills westward. But in many

* I do not think I have mentioned it before, but the monks were considerable wool-staplers. Messrs. Hamlyn's factory, adjoining the ruins of the abbey, may be regarded as the survival.

places it disappears altogether, and not even the most enthusiastic antiquary could trace it to the cultivated country beyond the moorland limits. Most of it is gone ; more is going, century by century, perhaps year by year, and few now use the track save the moorman or his charges—the half-wild sheep and shaggy cattle. But (altering the poet's line a little)

‘The odour of sanctity clings to it still,’

and one cannot help calling up a picture of the hooded brethren with their long file of horses or mules laden with packs winding down the slope towards the old gray cross which, for whatever cause set up, was undoubtedly regarded by them with a feeling of reverence, a feeling which it should still command in the breast of every follower of Christianity.

Down the deepening valley the Avon flows onward. All about it are the remains of a bygone race—pounds where the wild man kept his cattle, and the rings marking the huts where he once dwelt. Of the former there is a large specimen close to the Abbot's Way; of the latter the number is legion. Presently the granite crests reappear, the heads of Black and Shipley Tors rising on either side the dashing stream as it approaches Shipley Bridge, where the moor, so far as the Avon is concerned, may be said to end.

About a quarter of a mile below this bridge, the first on its course, the river forms Zeal Cascades and Pool—next to the Awns and Dendles on the Yealm, perhaps the most romantic spot on the southern edge of Dartmoor. Under the shadow of thick coppice the stream tumbles over rocky ledges, eventually finding a momentary peace in a dark rift where the waters ‘glide sullenly along in their narrow channel between perpendicular walls of solid rock, which re-echo the roar of the falling waters above.’ It is a bit of a scramble to get down to this wild and lovely spot, but the reward is more than sufficient.

The remaining two miles to Brent are pleasant enough, but in no wise remarkable. Below the lane, shrouded in thicket or coppice, runs the river; above the hedges rises the conical form of Brent Hill, an outpost of the moor. And so we enter the village.

Brent is not an interesting place. It looks, and is, undoubtedly ancient, but its antiquity is not attractive; the cottages are neither venerable nor picturesque. It is a good-sized village—indeed, I believe the inhabitants claim for it the dignity of a town. Here we reach the Great Western Railway, which, in this hilly country, has some heavy gradients, running, as it were, over the very feet of the moor. Brent owes much to the railway, and since it has by its means been placed in communication with the outer world, many villa residences and lodging-houses have sprung into existence, which in summer time have their full complement of visitors. For the town—we will give it this dignity—is a good headquarters both for the Dartmoor tourist and the angler, who will find trout in the upper, and salmon in the lower, waters. The fishing of the former is free, as it is all over the moor proper, and many a basket may be taken by the skilful son of Zebedee. But the fish are, as a rule, rather small, especially when you get well up into the moor. What they lack in quantity, however, they make up in quality, and the Dartmoor trout is the sweetest and most toothsome fish I have ever eaten.

Brent church is a large cruciform building, partly Decorated, partly Perpendicular. Some of it is, indeed, earlier than either of these periods, the tower being Norman and Early English. There is also a Norman font. Some of the flamboyant tracery in the windows is good.

Above the town towers Brent Hill to a height of 1,017 feet. The slopes are smoother and more green than those of the tors generally, yet it is a tor for all that, for it has a rocky summit, though not of granite, but a species of trap.

As near the top as the nature of the ground will permit are the ruins of a building about which there is a great conflict of opinion. Some consider them to be the remains of a thirteenth-century chapel erected by the monks of Buckfast, once owners of the manor of Brent; others claim for the building a Druidical (!) origin; while the more common opinion is that it was merely a house for the man who, in the troublous days of old, tended the beacon fire, for Brent Hill commands both sea and land for miles.

The view from this frontier tor is indeed celebrated. Northward and westward, of course, stretches the moor, few tors in the interior—indeed, I always think this south quarter of Dartmoor far behind the other three* in picturesqueness—but several near at hand. Going from left to right we see the bold form of the Eastern Beacon; Sharp Tor and Three Barrows (which, by the way, is *not* a tor) above the valley of the Erme, Eastern and Western Whitebarrow, and the twin rocks known by the odd name of Puppers. Nearer, Black and Shipley Tors guard the pass of the Avon. Eastward the spire of Buckfastleigh rises above that uninteresting town, and beyond is Ashburton and the tors that look down upon the Widecombe Valley, with the long back of Hameldon facing them. Then there is Totnes, and beyond the estuary of the Teign. The view to the south commands the South Hams, the most fertile tract in Devon, with a strip of blue sea showing wherever there is a break in the coastline.

For a mile or two below Brent the Avon flows down an open valley. Presently it reaches the little village of Avonwick, which, like all the villages in this part of the world, encases its cottages in slate armour that certainly does not add to their picturesqueness. In fact,

* The moor has for centuries been divided into *quarters*—north, south, east and west. Of these, the north has the loftiest eminences. The highest point is 2,049 feet above sea-level.

what with the untidy-looking slaty stone of which they are built, and the covering aforesaid, the cottages of the South Hams wear an air somewhat forlorn.

It is a pleasant bit of road from Avonwick to Diptford, following very closely, for the most part, the river's bank, so that we get a good view of the transparent stream flashing over the rocks and pebbles of its stony bed. The spire of Diptford Church, which, by the way, is slightly crooked, reminds one at first sight of that of Buckfastleigh, not so much in appearance as in situation, for, like its not very distant neighbour, it crowns a steep hill above the river. It is not a thing of beauty, by any means; when you approach it more nearly you will find one side hung with slate and a good deal of the stucco (which ought never to have been there) peeled off. But the church itself is clean and well kept, though hardly, perhaps, worth climbing the hill to examine. It has breadth and light, and that is about all that can be said for it. The pillars are rude octagonal monoliths of Dartmoor granite, some of them very much out of the perpendicular; in fact, the north aisle looks—though the Vicar informs me that it is not—decidedly precarious. From the vicarage garden, close at hand, the panorama of Dartmoor and the country adjacent is fine. Below Diptford a fisherman's path follows the river along the side of a rocky glen, which the works and débris of the new railway to Kingsbridge certainly do not improve. And so onwards and downwards, now through woodland, now through meadow or plough—and sometimes the walking is rough enough—past the little two-arched bridge of Bickham, till the valley closes in, bounded by wooded hills. Set among these is Gara (vernacular Gera) Bridge, one of the prettiest spots on the Avon, from which, in one direction, the road to Modbury winds through the woods, on the other that to Dartmouth. After a little the valley opens again, and we reach

Topsham Bridge—like Gara, a single arch, for the Avon is still young. The house seen across the river a little above this bridge is Hazelwood, belonging to Sir Henry Peek, and the high building with the buttresses against the hill is the family vault and mortuary chapel.

The two miles below Topsham Bridge are, I consider, the most delightful on the whole river. The path winds through perpetual woodland, in some places terribly punished by the blizzard of March, 1891. In a high wind one portion is certainly dangerous, for half-broken branches sway and creak overhead and bid fair at any moment to join the dead and rotting timber strewn on the ground below. Nearly every tree has lost its crown, and the whole aspect of the place, when not in leaf, is a sad and forcible tribute to the fury of that never-to-be-forgotten storm.

We emerge from the woods to find facing us a lofty railway embankment of slate ballast, part of the new railway, and follow the lane at its foot to Loddiswell Mill Bridge. Above it, for some distance, the river has lost its impetuous current, and forms a long, still reach. This is caused by the mill-weir, and is, I believe, a good place for salmon. The bridge itself is the largest, so far, on the Avon, and has three arches. The situation is pretty enough: on the one hand green meadows with patches of gorse; on the other a steep hill covered with trees and scarred by a deep quarry. Below is the lofty single arch of Hatch Bridge, a severely modern structure, which carries the road from Kingsbridge to Brent up over the hill to Loddiswell.

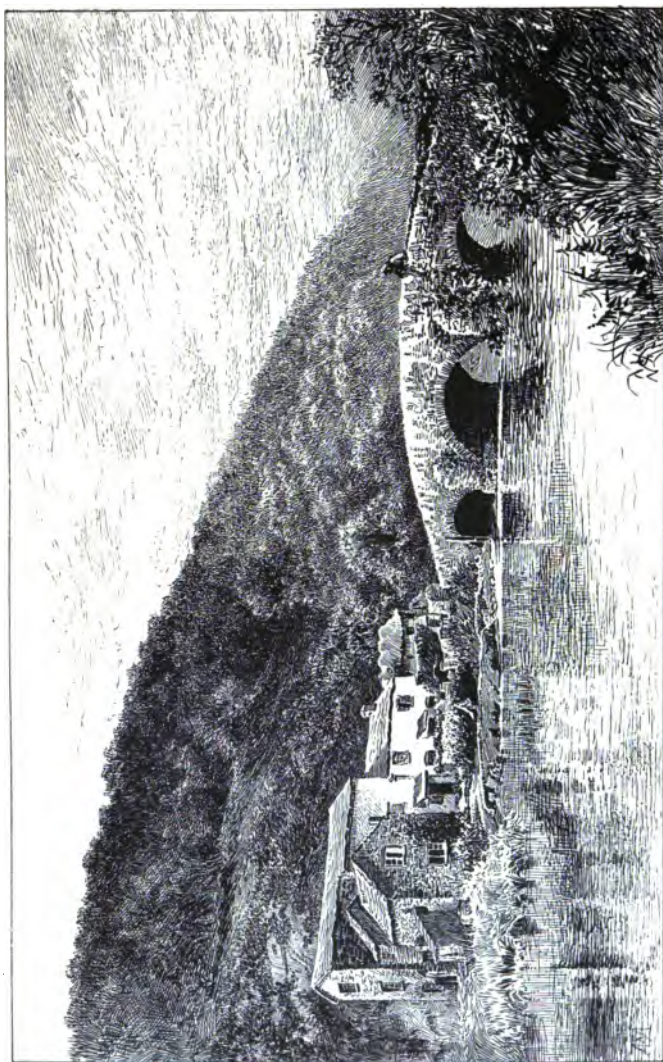
A fine view of the whole valley, from where the river bends round the base of Loddiswell hill right down to the head of the estuary, may be had from this road halfway up the hill towards Kingsbridge. And evening is the best time to see it. Then the hills away towards Modbury stand out purple against the sunset, and the pools of the

Avon in the winding 'strath' below, nearly hidden by the hazels by day, gleam like burnished gold. The last reach, two or three miles away, is spanned by a bridge of many arches, over which, sharp against the sky, is the distant spire of Bigbury. Above, on the hill to the left, the imposing tower of Churchstow cuts the sky-line, while over against this elevated hamlet, also set upon a hill, stands Loddiswell—a village of contrasts.

Loddiswell is one of the untidiest villages to be seen out of Ireland. Sundry cottages are actually in ruins, and no one appears to think it worth while to cart the rubbish away. Others are in the last stage of decay, the thatch bulging, the windows askew. And yet, within a few yards, maybe across the way even, you see neat modern houses as prosperous-looking as any between Brent and Kingsbridge. But for all this it is not an unpicturesque village. Its position on the brow of the hill, with scarce an inch of level ground near, has resulted in the cottages being placed in an irregular manner which will always redeem it from tameness. It is a jumble, but a pleasant jumble. I do not know that there is anything particular about the church, a plain little building with an Early English tower.

There are two earthworks near Loddiswell: one on Blackdown—from which there is a fine view—in shape an irregular oval, in area about eleven acres; and another of smaller dimensions, known as Stanborough.

The Avon is a very little river, only about twenty miles from its source to the sea. Even below Loddiswell it is scarcely more than a good-sized brook. But how clear it is! almost as bright and quite as sparkling as when fighting its way through the Dartmoor boulders. We follow its course—there is a road now—over Hatch Bridge, and down the sunny valley to Aveton Giffard (which you may pronounce *Awton* or *Aviton*, as you list), where it first meets the salt water.



LODDESWELL BRIDGE. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED.

The village of Aveton Giffard consists of a 'long unlovely street' at the head of a kind of green delta made by the Avon and two or three little tributaries. This delta is crossed by the bridge we saw from the hillside just now, approached at each end by a long causeway. Over it passes the road to Kingsbridge. The church is a fine building with a Norman tower and Early English body. At the side of the tower is a curious and massive stair-turret, circular, with a pointed top. The Early English doorways on the north are good. The church stands on high ground above the village, and from the churchyard there is a view over the roofs of the windings of the Avon seaward.

Notwithstanding the prosaic appearance of the village, the inhabitants of Aveton Giffard would appear to be given to poetry. In no churchyard do I remember to have seen so many poetic effusions as in this. Hardly a headstone is without its verse, all in the style of *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*.

The estuary, deep and narrow, lies between pastoral or wooded slopes, and is about three miles in length. The river enters the sea over yellow sands, which from the cliffs above by Mount Folly Farm can be clearly seen beneath the shallow, transparent water. Just inside the low horn of cliff, which runs out on the eastern side, is the hamlet of Bantham, a few whitewashed and thatched cottages, and a little quay under the greenery of the cliff. The bend in the river near this quay, a bold curve of deep water, is known as Salmon Pool, and is, as the name would imply, a favourite haunt of the fish. From the breezy pastures at the back of Bantham there is a good view eastward of the headland called Bolt Tail, and of the arched Thurlestone Rock, an isolated mass of sandstone, geologically curious, cropping up as it does among the slates. The coast is less interesting westward, though this Bigbury Bay, as it is called, makes a fine

sweep from Bolt Tail to Stoke Point, near the mouth of the Yealm.

Close to the meeting of river with sea is Borough or Burr Island, a low conical islet covered with grass. At low tide it becomes a peninsula, a ridge of sand cast up by the meeting of the fresh and salt water uniting it to the mainland. The island was at one time 'the St. Michael's Mount of Devonshire,' a chapel to that saint standing on its summit. Says Camden :

'Where Avon's waters with the sea are mixt,
St. Michael firmly on a rock is fixt.'

But the saint is less esteemed nowadays than in the olden time. His shrine has fallen, and not a fragment remains to mark the spot where the fisher folk of Bigbury Bay once paid their devotions. For the walls on the site of the chapel are those of a 'tea house'—*O tempora, O mores!*—and as if *that* were not enough there is a public-house down below. But it looks very much as though St. Michael le Burgh still kept a watchful eye upon his islet. The ruins of the 'tea house' speak for themselves, and the public-house is empty and deserted.

Bigbury Bay was once the scene of a terrible shipwreck. In the year 1772, the ship *Chanteloupe*, homeward bound from the West Indies, went ashore somewhere near Avonmouth, and out of a large crew and many passengers only one man was saved. In those days the people of this neighbourhood must have been little short of savages, for in connection with the disaster is told a story almost too horrible to believe. It is said that the sole survivor was not the only one who reached the shore alive. A lady passenger, who had put on all her jewels, was washed on to the beach, but instead of receiving succour she was pounced upon by some ruffians, who not only stripped her, but cut off her fingers and slit her ears in their mad haste to secure the fatal jewellery. She

was then buried in the sand, and the crime might have remained a secret had it not been for a dog who scratched up the body, which was, thanks to a compassionate lady, ultimately buried in a neighbouring churchyard. It is satisfactory to know that vengeance overtook the murderers. Three of them at any rate came to untimely ends.

Within two or three miles of the Avon at Loddiswell Bridge are the headwaters of an estuary which, as it bears the name of Salcombe River, deserves, I suppose, a place among the rivers of Devon, though of river in the ordinary sense there is none. A tiny stream, it is true, enters at Kingsbridge, another at Dodbrooke its suburb. But these can have nothing to do with the formation of the so-called river; it is an arm of the sea.

And a very fair arm, too. With it the narrow estuary of the Avon cannot compare; it has long creeks—or *cricks*, as the people call them—and still backwaters, like the Dart or Cornish Fal, and is, perhaps, more 'lakelike' than either. From Kingsbridge to Bolt Head, a distance of seven miles, it is full of charm—a charm that does not vanish even at low tide, for the dun sandbanks, dotted with seabirds, contrast pleasantly with the green pastures or the promontories that, here and there, clad in the darker green of woodland, vary the emerald tints of the meadows.

Presently, embarking in a little steamer that plies between Kingsbridge and Salcombe, we will examine its shores more narrowly; but Kingsbridge itself is a town of no ordinary interest, and if, as I did, you put up for a night or two at the King's Arms and prowl about the town and neighbourhood, you will not find the time wasted. It is a very old town, as old as the days of the Heptarchy. Here is the legend about it, of which you may believe as much or as little as you list. They say that a Saxon king on one of his progresses came to the Dod brook.

Here he very naturally paused to consider how he should reach the other shore dryshod. Assistance was at hand. A bold retainer stepped into the middle of the stream and offered his lord a 'back.' The king took a short run, alighted on the henchman's shoulders, and with a dexterous spring reached the opposite bank. And so *Kingsbridge* got its name.

A pleasant, sunny place is Kingsbridge, quite the pleasantest of the small towns in the South Hams. The long street sloping to the quay has an air of life about it that speaks well for its prosperity—a prosperity which shows that folks may sometimes err who think that the well-being of a town depends upon railway communication. For Kingsbridge has (at the time of writing) no railway—is, indeed, with the exception of Salcombe, about as far from one as any town in England—and yet it thrives. The fact is that it is a local business centre, the metropolis indeed of the South Hams, and in its isolation enjoys a trade which would probably go to Plymouth were it brought into communication by rail with the outer world. And it soon will be. Railway works, as we have seen, are in active progress down the Avon Valley, and a very few months ought to prove in what manner the fortunes of Kingsbridge will be affected by the running of trains between it and Plymouth by way of Brent. There are some who say that the advantages of the little town as a place of residence will more than outweigh any loss to its commerce. I hope this will be the case. The country is certainly delightful, but, like the Scotchman, 'I hae ma doots.'

Of the main street the most conspicuous feature is a group made up of the church spire and market-house—inelegantly named the Shambles—the front supported on granite pillars forming a sort of piazza. It is a pity that this building, which no one will call handsome, was not erected elsewhere, as the east end of the church is more

than half hidden by it. The latter building dates from about the end of the fourteenth century, and is late Decorated in style, and of cruciform shape. Within there is nothing of special interest except a marble monument by Flaxman; without, a tablet of slate affixed to the wall of the chancel has the following curious epitaph:

‘Underneath lieth the body of Robert, commonly called Bone Phillips, who died July 27th, 1793, aged 65 years, at whose request the following lines are here inserted:

‘Here lie I at the chancel door,
Here lie I because I am poor,
The further in the more you’ll pay,
Here lie I as warm as they.’

‘Bone’ was by trade a cooper, and, according to tradition, a most eccentric character.

Until the church was built the good folk of Kingsbridge had to toil up hill a distance of nearly two miles to their parish church. This was at Churchstow—the lofty tower we noticed on the hill-top above Hatch Bridge. Of this ascent they appear to have made the most, and complaining that it was ‘founded on the summit of a high *mountain*,’ they obtained permission to build a church in the town. As, in addition to its remoteness, Churchstow village appears mainly to consist of ‘one church, two public-houses, and innumerable babies,’ it seems strange that Kingsbridge did not obtain this favour before, particularly as the town belonged to Buckfast Abbey. But perhaps the monks thought that a little mortification of the flesh would do the townsmen no harm, and considered the ascent of the ‘mountain’ an exercise profitable for both soul and body. I can myself bear witness that the walk from Kingsbridge to Churchstow is as good a Sabbath day’s journey as any Christian, however muscular, need desire.

Another building in the town which attracts attention is the Grammar School, a little above the church, founded in 1688 by Thomas Crispin, a native of Kingsbridge, who

had bettered his fortune by migrating to Exeter. There is also a house with some well-carved wainscoting, said to have belonged to the monks of Buckfast, and at Dodbrooke the birthplace of Peter Pindar, alias John Wolcot.

This worthy was educated at the Grammar School, and even in early youth evinced that appreciation for the burlesque which so distinguished him in later life. Having a quarrel with a cobbler who had poked fun at him for being birched, he fired a pistol in the man's face. Blood flowed freely—indeed, the man was almost blinded. But, strange to say, he felt no pain; the pistol had been charged with the blood of a *bullock*!

Wolcot was designed for the medical profession, which he, indeed, entered, and when only twenty-nine became physician to the Governor of Jamaica, Sir William Trelawny. I do not know whether it was dislike of the profession or some other reason actuated him, but he soon abandoned medicine, and, forsaking the beautiful West Indian island, returned to England and took Holy Orders. But not even the Church could satisfy his versatile genius. He began to write burlesque poetry, and from the house in London which he shared with Opie the painter went forth many of the satires and epigrams against Farmer George and his Ministers that so delighted the town. He died in 1819, aged eighty-one.

Another and very different worthy (though not native) of Kingsbridge was John Hicks, Nonconformist minister. During the reign of the Merry Monarch, he, in common with other Dissenters, met with persecution—a persecution which Hicks, who was a fine able-bodied man, was not slow to resent. It is said that on one occasion an official from the Bishop's court was sent to serve him with a citation. When he called at Hicks's house, that gentleman himself met him—with a *cane*. The startled

official faltered out that he came to see 'Mr. Hicks, gentleman.' 'I am John Hicks, minister of the Gospel,' said Hicks sternly. The man vanished. In 1671 he published a pamphlet, 'A Sad Narrative of the Oppressions of many Honest People in Devon,' which gave such offence that two messengers were sent to apprehend him. By chance this doughty 'Minister of the Gospel' fell in with these apparitors while still *en route*, fraternized with them, dined in their company, and even joined them in vilifying himself. Having enjoyed his dinner he ordered his horse, and then telling them who he was, proceeded to chastise them till they begged his pardon. He then rode to London, and boldly asked and obtained an interview with the King. Charles charged him with abusing his ministers and magistrates. 'Oppression, may it please your Majesty, makes a wise man mad,' Hicks replied. 'The justices, beyond all law, have very much wronged your Majesty's loyal subjects, the Nonconformists in the West.' He so impressed the King that orders were actually given that the Dissenters should be treated with more consideration, and permitted to build meeting-houses.

Hicks came to a violent end. He joined the unhappy Duke of Monmouth, was taken and executed. In part he was the cause of the death of Lady Alice Lisle, who was condemned by the brute Jeffreys for concealing him and his fellow fugitive Nelthorpe. The subject forms one of Ward's frescoes in the Houses of Parliament, where Hicks and Nelthorpe both figure in company with the kind-hearted lady who gave them shelter.*

Let us now make our way to the little quay whence the steamer starts for Salcombe. It is a pleasant spot on the edge of a strip of greensward, where you may sit and watch the manœuvres of the few coasters which get as far as the head of the estuary. Up the hillside clusters the town, the church spire standing out boldly against

* 'Kingsbridge Estuary,' by S. P. Fox.

the blue sky. I write as I saw it first on a hot August morning, when the estuary sparkled in the sunlight, when the hills in the distance quivered in the warm air, and the seats on the deck of the steamer were like the top of a stove. It was quite a relief to get under weigh, and create a fictitious breeze. A few hundred yards down and New Quay is reached, where ships of larger burden berth, and where the Plymouth steamer comes to her moorings. Passing the shipbuilding yards, where the trade is decaying owing to the construction of so many iron vessels, the estuary suddenly widens, and Charlton Church will be seen conspicuous on the left. To the right the pinnacles of the fine tower of West Alvington rise over the swelling pastures. In this churchyard might, not long since, have been read the following spiteful, and now happily nearly obliterated, inscription :

‘ Here lyeth the body of Daniel Jeffery, the son of Michael Jeffery, and Joan his wife: he was buried y^e 2nd day of September, 1746, in y^e 18th year of his age.

‘ This youth, when in his sickness lay,
did for the minister send that he would
Come and with him Pray, But he would not attend ;
But when this young man Buried was
the minister did him admit he should be
Carried into church that he might money geet ;
By this you see what man will dwo to geet
money if he can, who did Refuse to come
and pray by the Foresaid young man.’

In the middle of the last century the schoolmaster seems to have been very much *abroad* indeed at West Alvington—not to speak of the poet. Yet the vicar seems to have appreciated the lines at their proper value. It is said that the reverend gentleman was waited upon by the churchwardens—who knew that the youth had died suddenly of virulent smallpox almost before he could be visited—with a request that the epitaph should be removed. But he declined, saying that he ‘ could not have a hand in the destruction of such *poetry*.’*

* ‘ Kingsbridge Estuary.’

There are two fine mansions near West Alvington: one the Tudor House of Bowringsleigh, formerly seat of the Bowrings, lies in a rich and beautiful valley; the other (like Bowringsleigh, invisible from the water) is Gerston, the property of the Bastard family. There is a curious story about Gerston. One day a young labourer while engaged in ploughing turned up a large gold coin of Edward III. 'This,' said he, 'shall buy a wedding-ring for my wife.' Shortly after he fell ill, and died unmarried. The next owner of the coin also remained in single blessedness, and those who in succession have possessed it have likewise died benedict. In 1864, when I last heard of it, it was still in the possession of a bachelor. I cannot do better than repeat Mr. Fox's advice, 'Beware, then, O ye young ladies, how you accept of this fatal coin as a legacy lest you, too, should be consigned to the terrible fate of spinsterhood!'

Here and there on both sides of the estuary are deserted lime-kilns, their forlornness hidden by kindly ivy. The thatched cottage near the one on the right was some thirty or forty years ago the scene of a terrible tragedy. The mother going to feed the pigs took with her her child, leaving her outside the door of the sty. While playing with the latch, the child managed to shut the door, which it appears could only be opened from the outside. Returning to the cottage, the clothes of the poor little thing caught fire, and the flames were communicated to the baby. The imprisoned mother heard their screams, but was powerless, and both were burnt to death.

And now high on the hills to the westward the spire of Marlborough Church is conspicuous. This church may be seen from all parts of the South Hams, and is as well-known an object on this side of the moor as Brent Tor is on the other. As it comes into view we open out Wide-gates, where the estuary attains its greatest width, and is a mile or more across. Right over the bows on the steep

hillside is Portlemouth Church rising above the few cottages, making up the village which in olden days they say gave its name to the estuary. Now comes a sudden bend, and for the first time we catch a glimpse of the sea, out of which rises in jagged outline the fine cape called Bolt Head. As the boat turns the corner Salcombe comes into view, stretching along the hill opposite Portlemouth. On a rock at the foot of the wooded hill a little beyond the town, washed by the waves, are the picturesque ruins of Salcombe Castle, held by Sir Edmund Fortescue for four months against the soldiers of the Parliament. They so respected his gallantry, that when he capitulated he was permitted to march out with all the honours of war.

The old part of Salcombe consists mainly of a long and exceedingly narrow (not to say dingy) street running parallel with, but a little above, the water. Salcombe is, I believe, noted for having the warmest climate in England, though Flushing near Falmouth is in this respect a dangerous rival. Consequently sub-tropical plants flourish exceedingly. Oranges and aloes bloom in the open air, and myrtles, geraniums, and fuchsias are quite common. There is a new white hotel standing in its own grounds just above the water; to those who are happily ignorant of *res angusta domi* a very pleasant abode indeed.

From Salcombe to Bolt Head is a most delightful ramble. The road cut in the hillside for some part of the way winds through woods with many a gap showing the estuary and the rugged headland at its mouth. Just beyond the hotel is Woodcote, belonging to James Anthony Froude. Till recently the historian resided at The Molt, then the property of Lord Courtenay, a little further on. But this oddly-named mansion has now been sold, and I believe passed into other hands. A Kingsbridge gentleman told me that The Molt is supposed to be the Rev. S. Baring-Gould's 'Court Royal.' Combe

Royal, however, near Knightsbridge answers better, at least as to situation, to the novelist's description.

Beyond Woodcote the road passes under a modern battery. Beneath on the rocky foreshore is the ruined castle, of which we have a close view. Then—the cliffs ceasing for a space—the road sweeps round the cove of North Sands, where the submarine cable from Brest first touches English soil. Hence, ascending through the woods at the back of The Molt, which is perched high above the water, it drops by a steep rough hill to South Sands and the lifeboat station. In the low cliff on the south side of this cove is a cave in which grows a luminous moss. It cannot be reached except at low tide, and even then should not be entered without a light, as there is a pit a little way in quite deep enough to cause a nasty fall. Of course, when the moss is reached, the light must be extinguished. The valley at the back beneath wooded tors is known as Hanger Mill Combe. From South Sands a road winds upwards through a larch plantation to Bolt Head.

Much has been said about Prawle Point as the finest piece of coast scenery in South Devon. Why it should be preferred to the Bolt, as people call it—you never hear of Bolt Head—I cannot imagine. Surely there is nothing about Prawle Point to equal the grand broken precipice upon which you come very suddenly, if you will, as I did, return to Salcombe by the path cut by Lord Courtenay in the face of the cliff. Where on the rival headland are the towering castle-like pinnacles that stand up so boldly against the sky, coloured with innumerable lichens or supporting trailing masses of ivy? It is, I suppose, a hundred feet to the summit where the white signal station stands, and perhaps two or three hundred more to the muttering tide beneath. Away to the eastward the Prawle thrusts its rough promontory into the waves, crowned by its flag-staff, even now decked with bright

flags 'speaking' a passing steamer. At our feet the blue estuary winds inland between the woods of the Molt, the ruined castle, and the 'genteeler' parts of Salcombe on the one hand, and the steep bare hills of the eastern side on the other. A schooner comes gaily down the 'river,' the water breaking briskly away from her bows, the crew from this height looking like pigmies. Far astern in marked contrast a black object crawls slowly across the channel; it is the ferry-boat from Salcombe to Portle-mouth.

CHAPTER IX

THE ERME AND THE YEALM.

Erme Mouth—Mothecombe—Flete—Holbeton—Oldaport—Sequers Bridge—
Ermington—White Ale—Keaton Bridge—Ivybridge—Harford—John
Prideaux and Speaker Williams—Piles Wood—An Ancient Hut—Erme
Head—Yealm Head—*Awns and Dendles*—Cornwood—Lotherton Bridge
—The Bone Caverns—Yealmpton—Toreus—Puslinch—The Estuary—
Coffleet—Newton Ferrers—Noss—The Voyage to Plymouth.

THE Avon is not the only river that pours its waters into Bigbury Bay. Within a morning's walk we come to another opening in the slate cliffs, and look up the most delightfully wooded estuary in Devon—the lower waters of the Erme. From the downs above we can see the whole sweep of the great bay—from Stoke Point towards Plymouth to the little fishing, and I fear once smuggling, village of Hope, snugly hidden in a cove under Bolt Tail. Midway is Borough Island again; on this side scarped down to the water's edge, and beyond again the arched Thurlestone.

The Erme meets the sea between low and rugged cliffs. The foreshore is of rock, too, worked into jagged edges by the fretting tide. But here and there a beach of delightfully firm sand makes a break in the ridges, and the bathing is excellent. The mouth is some half a mile wide, and barred, like the Avon, by a sandy bank thrown up in the struggle between river and sea.

Above the beach on the left of the river mouth, where

Mr. Mildmay has built a bathing-pavilion, and at the head of a green and sheltered valley—'sheltered,' as I was told, 'from every wind but the south, and where *anything* will grow'—is the picturesque hamlet of Mothecombe; and on the slope beneath the village, just inside a rocky slope that can hardly be called a cliff, so green it is, stand the white houses of the coastguard station. Having again requisitioned the services of the local Charon, let us cross, ascend to Mothecombe, and look about us.

What a pretty spot it is, this remote handful of cottages, with its green crofts and orchards, and little brook making its way down the bottom towards the shining sea! And then if you turn the corner, and get on ground a little higher, what a prospect opens up of wooded river, blue moorland, and ocean still more blue! No wonder Mothecombe is favoured of picnic parties, though inn it has none. But I suppose that hot water and milk may be had at most of the cottages, so that only the thirsty disciples of John Barleycorn suffer, which they can very well afford to do.

He who has not the *entrée* to the carriage-drive through the grounds of Flete will see little of the estuary of the Erme; and I would here express my obligations to Mr. Mildmay for permitting an intrusion on his privacy which enabled me to see a very beautiful piece of river-scenery. Turning to the right above Mothecombe, the drive descends towards the river. At no time actually level with it, for more than a few yards it follows its windings, sometimes uphill, sometimes down, now over a furzy brow, now through an orchard, presently to plunge into an oak wood rising from the river's brim, with great rhododendrons for undergrowth. For about four miles this road continues, and at every turn there is a fresh view of the estuary, and of similar woods climbing the shores opposite.

It must be admitted, however—and this remark applies

to all other estuaries—that the scene is at its best at high-tide, when the oozy flats with their grassy islets are covered. It seems rather strange that this alluvial soil does not disturb the clear current as it meanders seaward. But it is as pellucid running between the banks of mud as when rushing down the moorland valley.

About half-way to Flete House a road turns off at a point where the drive skirts a sedgy bay to Holbeton. Holbeton is an irregular, rambling sort of village, placed in a dip in the higher ground among orchards. I do not suppose that anyone would turn out of his way to visit it were it not for the church, the beautiful restoration of which is a lasting monument to the generosity of the owner of Flete. Apart from any restoration, however, it is an ancient and interesting building. The earliest portion is an Early English tower and spire. Under a canopy over the south porch is a figure of our Lord, with an angel on either side in adoration; the door is decorated in a very uncommon style with diamond-shaped panels, filled with sacred monograms in ironwork on a white ground. The nave and aisles are unusually wide. There is a very magnificent chancel-screen—partly restored, partly quite new—parclose screens, and, again, plainer screens, dividing the transept from the body of the church. The chancel is paved with coloured marbles; the altar-rails are of dark and light wood. There is a splendid marble altar, surmounted by a painting of our Lord crowned with thorns—I believe by Domenichino. The chancel-roof has richly-gilded bosses and angel corbels. Every bench-end throughout the building, as well as the white stone pulpit, is richly carved. The font is of coloured marbles.

In the north transept is one of the most elaborate monuments in the West of England. This is the monument to the Hele family, who once lived at Flete House. There are no less than twenty-three figures, male and female, arranged in four tiers. All are

kneeling with the exception of a male, who reclines upon the third tier with kneeling females at his head and feet.

I have before animadverted on the fulsome versification that so often makes the epitaph more an object of sarcasm than of respect. But in Holbeton Churchyard is an inscription that stands out in strong contrast to these eulogistic utterances, and has both good sense and the true poetic ring. A verse on the tombstone of John Elliott warns us that

‘ Our life is ever on the wing,
And death is ever nigh ;
The moment when our lives begin
We all begin to die.’

Returning to the drive, we find ourselves approaching the head of the estuary. Across the river, nearly opposite to the spot where the road to Holbeton passes upward, are the remains of an ancient walled camp. They are not visible from this, or indeed from any other, part of the drive, but may be reached by means of the wooden footbridge or ‘clam.’ This camp was quadrangular, and embraced an area of no less than twenty-nine acres. Its age is quite unknown, but Mr. R. J. King says ‘it may have been the work of the Romans before their withdrawal, or it may have been raised by some British King of Damnonia, working and building under Roman tradition for defence against the Saxon host.’ There are now only fragments at the east and west ends—that at the east certainly appeared to me of Roman workmanship. The wall is some six feet thick, and now forms part of the orchard fence of Oldaport Farm, which name, by the way, has a strong suspicion of Latin about it. The western end is in a wood rising above the river. The farmer told me that in his father’s time this fortification was in much better preservation ; that there were entrances at each side, one surmounted by a rude arch of ‘a sort of

red sandstone.' Building operations were, as usual, responsible for its destruction.

The country about this old farm is varied and pleasant. Towards the river estuary valleys open, separated one from the other by promontories wooded from base to summit. Here and there the wayfarer comes upon unexpected sheets of still water, little bays and creeks nestling between the headlands. Between the camp of Oldaport and Orcherton Farm, one of these valleys is watered by a stream coming down from Orcherton Mill. Up this stream—right up, indeed, to the mill itself—the tide still flows, and it is quite obvious that at no distant date the whole valley was submerged at high-water, and practically impassable even when the tide was low. So that the builders of the camp chose their site well—on one side an arm of the estuary, on the other a deep valley; at one end a steep hill sloping down to the estuary itself, at the other the wall I have mentioned.

Presently we reach Flete House, a handsome castellated mansion, standing a little above the park-like meadows that stretch to the river's brink. Just outside the grounds the stream is spanned by Sequers bridge, over which passes the highroad to Plymouth. This is well above the salt water; nor is there any signs that an estuary is near, so thick are the woods that rise beyond the bend. Indeed, the Ernie has become quite a small river already, not more than forty or fifty feet wide at the outside; but although Dartmoor is seen rising at no great distance, it has not yet the characteristics of a moorland stream.

Crossing the Plymouth road, we re-enter the park, but only for a short distance, emerging in about half a mile upon the road to Ivybridge, close to the village of Ermington.

Ermington, a not particularly tidy village, is pleasantly situated on the hillside. I do not know that it is noted for anything but its church, remarkable for a crooked spire,

rising from a graceful Early English tower. This tower is not the oldest part of the church, for there is Norman work in the inner arch of the south door. The church, a fine one, has been well restored by the owner of Flete, and the bench-ends of the substantial oak seats are well carved. The Jacobean screen is curious, but looks very heavy against the much more elegant, though new, parclose screens. As at Holbeton, the floor of the chancel is of coloured marbles, and a massive slab of the same stone forms the altar. In the south transept is another altar for daily service, and both here and in the chancel are rose piscinæ. On the wall of the organ chamber is a good brass, dated 1583, to William Strachleigh, his wife, and only daughter, with kneeling figures of all three. One of the most interesting features of the church is an oak pulpit, carved by three of the rector's daughters. Under canopies are representations of six Biblical scenes, divided from each other by figures of saints, Apostles, and lawgivers. It is a beautiful piece of work. The arcades are in the Decorated style, and so are one or two windows; but the rest are Perpendicular. At the end of the south aisle is a handsomely-carved table monument, with canopy of Jacobean design; but who it commemorates I know not. At one time there was rivalry between the church bells of Ermington and those of Modbury, a little town three or four miles distant. The Modbury people thought they had the better peal, but the present Rector of Ermington informs me that, although this may have been the case at one timè, the old lines

‘Hark to Modbury bells,
How they do quiver;
Better than Ermington bells,
Down by the river,’

now contain a distinct libel.

Talking of Modbury reminds me that it is one of the few places—Kingsbridge is, I believe, another—which produces that curious drink called ‘white ale,’ in ancient

days pretty generally drunk throughout the South Hams. Old Westcote, who knew what was good, if anyone did, speaks of this beverage as the 'nappiest ale that can be drunk. . . . The ancient and peculiar drink of the Britons and Englishmen, and the wholesomest, whereby many in elder times lived a hundred years. . . . Whereunto nor Derby ale nor Webly ale in Herefordshire, nor St. Barnacs cow's thick milk in Braunton, our own county, may in anywise compare.' Perhaps it is as well that this seductive fluid is nowadays confined to the South Hams. What teetotaler, however rampant, could resist the temptation of possibly going down to posterity as a centenarian?

The scenery of the Erme valley at Ermington is prettily diversified by wood and meadow, and above it, at Keaton Bridge, it becomes more interesting still, for the single arch spans the river close to where the flood is divided by a rocky island. Between this spot and Ivybridge the restless current flows beneath the foliage of Drew Northstock and Lessonpiece woods, to which the bold slopes of the moor form an effective background.

'Ivybridge, a single house for the accommodation of travellers, situated most romantically on the banks of the river'—such is Clarke's description just a hundred years ago. He was much impressed by the 'continual cataract' of the Aune (as he mistakenly calls the Erme), and enjoyed it to advantage; for, being pressed for time, he viewed it by moonlight. 'Even this pleasure,' he writes, 'would have escaped me if it had not been for Jeremy, who, not being so attentive to the *length of their fingers here* as at Bridport, or not so anxious for the welfare of his *leather straps*, had strolled, while the horses were getting ready, to poke about for what he called "cowrosities," and returned, eager to communicate his discovery.' The Bridport incident is amusing. 'Jeremy, having met with some rebuffs either from his grace the

waiter, or his highness at the bar, betrayed his impatience to get forward by his eagerness to assist the postilion. "How now, Jeremy?" said I; "you are more alert than usual." "The master's eye, sir, makes the horse fat. I lost a leather strap at Weymouth, and as this seems to be a rum place, I'll take a squint at the length of their fingers, for fear the trunk should go too."

'The single house' has now been multiplied by tens and twenties. Ivybridge is now a town, not a large one certainly, but I am sure the inhabitants would not for a moment allow that it was a village. Perish the thought! Has it not big paper-mills, a foundry, several shops, at least two hotels, and other signs of town life? Yet, with all these attractions (?), I cannot say that Ivybridge is in itself an attractive place. Whatever of beauty or interest it possesses is due almost entirely to its situation on the Erme, and I doubt whether, if the shade of old Clarke could revisit it, he would find anything more to admire than he found a hundred years ago. It is the 'continual cataract' of the river that draws the tourist and the Plymouth excursionist, not the long and rather dusty street, really part of the highroad westward.

There are a few pretty villas scattered about the higher ground, but these are hardly of Ivybridge, and one is almost surprised to come upon such a bit of real loveliness as the *bridge*, from which the town takes its name, spanning the rocky channel of the Erme between the town and the lofty viaduct that carries the Great Western Railway across the wooded glen. By the way, this viaduct in its present form will soon be a thing of the past, which is a matter for regret, as the stone piers, with branching woodwork above, made up an object not at all ungraceful—certainly far more attractive than the solid stone edifice which is taking its place. The old *ivy bridge*, and the more modern, but fast vanishing, viaduct, are, then, the only really picturesque objects to which the

town can lay claim ; for the ivy-clad ruins of the old church are, architecturally, as uninteresting as the brand-new building which has of late years supplied its place, and stands close to the mouldering walls.

Clarke was not far wrong when he spoke of the Erme at Ivybridge as a 'continual cataract.' If you pass up under the viaduct and follow the river to the moorland village of Harford, you will find that his description is a happy one. The torrent—it is little more now—comes rushing, and in winter *roaring*, down a kind of rocky staircase, made up of huge boulders or shining black ledges, under which, if he can find a quiet pool, the trout lies lazily, just moving his tail, until your shadow falls across him, and then, *presto!* he is off ; but how he can get a yard up or down without being swept away is a puzzle. For a mile or two there is a fairly defined path—a wood on your left, the noisy river on your right ; but the latter part of the way is a rough scramble. When Harford Church came into view, I found it advisable to cross the river by the boulders, and so through a field or two into the lane ; but this is distinctly an acrobatic performance, requiring not only a quick eye, but a fine balance, and not to be rashly undertaken. In fact, my companion, who was shortsighted and spectacled, and perhaps made nervous by the everlasting roar and the gleaming 'watersides' between each rock, fell in so often, that at last he gave up in despair, and waded desperately to the shore, a sight for the river gods of the Erme.

The gray tower of Harford Church stands out well against the masses of brown and purple moor that slope almost to the churchyard wall ; but it rises over no village ; no clustering cottages environ it ; there is no village street. Here and there is a farm, and I think there is a school-house for the children of the scattered parish. It is a thorough moorland 'church town,' and you might spend a long summer day therein without

seeing more than a couple of labourers or a contingent of the 'birds that saved the Capitol,' which will probably attack you with lively hisses, until your raised stick sends them back to their grazing-ground on the scrap of common.

The little Perpendicular church is humble enough, but it contains one or two interesting monuments. In the south aisle is a brass, dated 1639, to John Prideaux, his wife, seven sons, and three daughters, the figures enamelled in colours, placed here by 'John Prideaux, their 4th sonne, Doctor of Divinity, and the King's Maestie's Professor thereof in the university of Oxford, Rector of Exeter College and chaplaine to Prince Henry King James the First and King Charles the First.' This worthy divine was a native of Harford, and would probably have ended his days where they began had he not failed to obtain the coveted post of parish clerk of Ugborough, an adjacent village. This failure sent him out into the world 'to seek his fortune.' Circumstances favoured him, and, having some talent and a good deal of laudable ambition, he managed to get an entry to Exeter College, with the result set forth on the family brass. Had he erected this memorial three years later, he might have added Bishop of Worcester to the list of his dignities, for to this see he was appointed in 1641. He was wont to say, 'Had I become parish clerk of Ugborough, I had never been Bishop of Worcester.'

An altar-tomb in the chancel has an inscription which speaks for itself:

'Here lyeth the corps of Thom̄s Willm̄s Esquire
Twice reader he in Court appointed was
Whose sacred minde to vertu did aspire
Of Parliament he speaker hence did passe

'The comen peace he studied to preserve
And trew religion ever to maynteyne
In place of Justyce where as he dyd serve
And now in heaven wth mightie Jove doth raigne.'

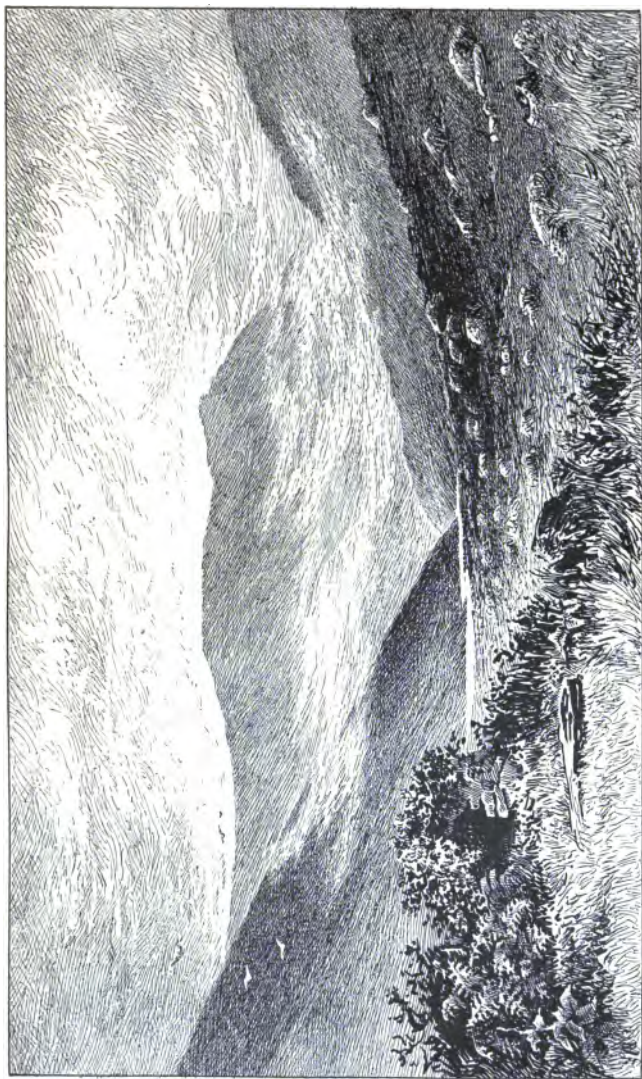
Both rhyme and reason are somewhat shaky. It is to be hoped that 'Speaker Williams' spoke better grammar than his epitaphist wrote it. He died in 1566. On the top of the tomb is a brass representing this other worthy of Harford in full armour.

Harford Bridge—the usual sturdy granite structure—is the last bridge on the course of the Erme. Above it the moor opens out in all its wild grandeur: on one side of the valley the great flank of Sharp Tor, on the other, the steep slopes of Stalldon. Those who are not afraid of a rough walk will find the task of following the river to its head a pleasant one, and, in spite of the nature of the ground, easier than a corresponding distance along a smoother pathway in some relaxing valley of the South Hams. For here the air is about as bracing as anywhere in the wide world—'like champagne' a lady once described it to me—and if you are sound in wind and limb you will get along right merrily despite boulders, and, it may be added, bogs, too, occasionally. And should the day be warm, what shelter more delightful than that flung over the mossy rock by the oaks of Piles Wood at the foot of Sharp Tor, with the liquid sound of the river below forever soothing the spirit even as the shade of the greenwood cools the body? Piles Wood is not as old as Wistman's Wood—it is not as weird; it is not as stunted—but it is, I am told, of very respectable antiquity, and it certainly gives quite as much shade. Like its more venerable brother on the banks of Dart, it is of small area—only a few acres at most—and you can walk right through it in five minutes or less. But you will leave it with regret, for it is the last covert you will see for many a mile; and if you want to get out of the sun by-and-by, you must fling yourself down beneath some rock—there are plenty on Dartmoor—and then perhaps you will realize, for the first time, maybe, the meaning of 'the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'

A mile beyond the wood there is a curiosity which even those who despise the 'dry bones of archæology' will scarcely like to pass without visiting. If you cross the river (it is easy enough now), you will find close to the mouth of a gully—the first after leaving the wood—an ancient beehive hut, the most perfect on the moor. How old it is I cannot say, but there is little doubt that it was once the abode of a miner—Phœnician (if he were ever here), Celt, Jew, or Christian no man knoweth—for both the banks of the little stream flowing down the gully, and those of the Erme itself, are littered with the refuse of tin works. Whoever lived here must have been either a dwarf or a hermit doing penance, for the interior is only about six feet across, and three feet six inches high.* As for the doorway, I could not even crawl in decently *à la Esquimaux*, but was fain to wriggle in *ventre à terre*. This little building is of course built of granite, roof and all; and the top of the dome still appears to be overlaid with turf, from which the heather sprouts so thickly that, to those unaccustomed to search for antiquities, the dwelling might very well pass for a heathery mound. There is a splendid view down stream of Sharp Tor, towards which the Erme winds with many a gleam and dash of broken water. On the hillside behind are numerous and large hut basements—so very much larger than the building below that the thought has occurred to me whether the ancient miners did not use it as a tool-house.

Nor are these the only remains of a former race in this part of Dartmoor. A little further north you will come upon a 'sacred'-circle, with a long stone row stretching away across the moor for two miles or thereabouts to a ruined kistvaen; and on the other side of the river is Erme pound—a large circular space enclosed by a wall

* These dimensions are only approximate; I had no means of taking accurate measurement.



BEEHIVE HUT NEAR ERME HEAD. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED, FROM A SKETCH BY J. LL. W. PAGE.

of piled granite—and other pounds near at hand known as Erme Pound Rings. But of these, or most of them, I have written before.*

Above all this, we reach the birthplace of the Erme; and a lonely birthplace it is—on a wild slope far from—well, *everywhere*, and I do not know how many hundred feet above the sea the river trickles out of a moss-grown clatter. No tor is visible to break the dull monotony, and on a 'gray' day, when the leaden heaven hangs low over the moorlands, the place to the solitary who rests upon one of these cushioned boulders is dismal in the extreme. My advice is, do not stay long, if alone, at any of these depressing spots; there are plenty of other resting places, as a rule, not far off, where you can, at any rate, get a glimpse of friendly tor, or even of distant mead and ploughland, and not feel as did the Ancient Mariner,

'Alone, alone; all, all alone.'

Within three miles of the springs of the Erme are those of another river which, like the Avon, runs almost parallel with it to the sea. This is the Yealm, though no Devonshire peasant calls it by that name. To him it is the *Yam*, and its source is *Yam Head*. It is the smallest of our Dartmoor rivers, having direct communication with the sea, and perhaps the least known in spite of the Awns and Dendles—ugly names for pleasant places—so dear to the Plymouth tripper. For we are getting near to Plymouth now, and many of the frontier heights of the moor look upon the old historical seaport.

But by the banks of Yealm no town stands. Nor are there many villages, for its course is but a dozen miles. Yet it passes through scenery that differs in some respects from that of its brethren, and a ramble along the first

* *Vide* 'An Exploration of Dartmoor and its Antiquities,' 3rd edition, p. 256.

four, and a sail over the last three miles will be found as full of enjoyment as a similar distance by or over any river in the West.

From Erme Head some terribly rough heathery ground has to be crossed before we reach Shavercombe, where the Yealm rises—a bare chine in the moorland. Down this valley the little river flows for a mile or two, through a stony wilderness; indeed, some of the granite masses lying up the western slope which is crested by the summits called Shell Top and Pen Beacon, are of a size quite phenomenal. Presently it plunges headlong down a clatter in a wild cataract, and then, racing along the bottom, vanishes into a wooded ravine.

I do not know a lovelier piece of river scenery anywhere than this (or these?) Awns and Dendles. The glen is deep and the sides very steep, yet not so precipitous but that they are clad with a thick grove of oaks, and further down with elm and ash as well. Where the foaming river is not bounding over miniature cliffs it is fretting round great boulders mantled thick with moss, or worming through dark channels, where the rock is black as ebony, and slippery as glass.

I suppose there are half a dozen of these cascades, the loftiest perhaps thirty feet in height. But a waterfall, loftier than any on the river, is made by a little tributary that comes down off the moor to the left as we follow the path through the glen. Over a declivity almost perpendicular, this rivulet plunges in a sheet of spray, after rain a really imposing spectacle. And ferns, of course, are ever dipping their fronds in the cool water, growing, too, about the roots and even between the branches of the trees, while higher up the more hardy bracken waves—in autumn, a sea of gold.

For two miles, or nearly so, extends this scene of sylvan beauty, until by-and-by the Yealm hurries on past Cornwood village to the green meadows spanned by one of

the graceful viaducts which almost reconciles the traveller to the unromantic railway. Cornwood, or Cross, as it is generally called, is a pretty village, and the granite walls of many of the cottages give it an air far more substantial than that of some of the rickety villages of the South Hams. And the church is worthy of the village, for, thanks to the late Lord Blachford, it has been beautifully restored. The handsome wooden altar and the rails of alabaster and marble are very rich, nor do they contrast inharmoniously with the ancient sedilia. These are of Decorated work, for the church of Cornwood is no modern building, as anyone may tell who looks at the Transition-Norman tower.

Still a mere brook, the river reaches Lee Mills, where it passes beneath the Plymouth road. For the next five or six miles to Yealmpton, road there is none, and very often not even a path, but the meadows are green without being marshy, and the woods are not impenetrable by any means. Besides there are not always woods, though on the one side or the other timber fringes this pretty stream most of the way.

One of the most attractive spots is at Lotherton Bridge, an old ivy-hung structure by the woodside, where the river is divided by a green island. Here, right under the bridge, a weir was years ago constructed for the leat of Worston Mill, now a ruin. Time and the winter flood has turned part of the weir into a little cascade, and although the leat still runs, some of the water finds its way over the mossy boulders. Below there is an orchard, one of many up this valley, which should be a good one for apples. Further down, as we approach Yealmpton, we shall pass one that wears a very ancient look: scarce a bough, scarce even a twig, but is covered with gray lichen. It is a melancholy spot even in bright sunshine.

And now Yealmpton Bridge is reached—a modern affair about which there is nothing picturesque—over which is

the road to Plympton. Between it and Yealmpton village are low cliffs or banks of limestone, where in days not long past geologists and naturalists found plenty of entertainment; for here were bone caverns—now destroyed by quarrying—where were discovered the remains of the rhinoceros, glutton and other animals now extinct in these islands, as well as those of creatures that still have their abode among us. The latest find was but the other day at Snowden's Quarry, near the bridge, where people came from far and near to see the skeleton of a *whale*!

Yealmpton is a large village spreading over the side of a well-timbered hill descending steep towards the river. There is a good church, principally in the Decorated style, and well restored by the late Mr. Bastard, of Kitley Park, a mile from the village towards Plymouth. A curious feature in the pillars are alternate bands of black and gray marble. Of these Devonshire marbles the architect, Butterfield, has made good use.

In an ogee arched recess in the north transept, over a table monument of the Coplestones, dating from 1630, are three interesting brasses. The upper one, which bears the date 1540, is in Latin. Below it hangs another, a translation in queer Old English of the first, from which we learn that they commemorate the virtues of 'Mabel, the wife of Copleston deare' (without mentioning the husband's Christian name at all). The other brass is to John Copleston, who died in the tenth year of Elizabeth. In the south transept is a very handsome modern brass to Edward Pollexfen Bastard, of Kitley, who died in 1838.

Beneath the shadow of the tower, over against the west door, there stands among modern memorials of the dead a tombstone of rugged aspect, of stern simplicity, a monument of days prehistoric. It is a narrow but substantial slab of granite, not even shaped with any care, and bearing but one word—TOREVS. Who Toreus was

no one can tell, but I do not think that he can—as some think—have had any connection with the Saxon palace, that, according to misty tradition, once stood at Yealmpton. Rather from the general style of the monument I think he must have lived a good thirteen or fourteen hundred years ago, for the characters have the appearance of the Romano-British inscriptions of the fifth or sixth century.

The blizzard has made sad havoc at Yealmpton. In one lane, elms, the growth of centuries, lay across the way, one after the other, in terribly regular order. The passage was completely blocked, and could only be traversed by climbing over (or creeping under) these fallen monarchs.

Down sloping fields, through a glen enlivened by the tones of the merry river—almost his final tones—and then over meadows fringed by stately timber, the pathway winds, until presently we reach the last bridge before Yealm enters the estuary. Then by a cart-track below the red house of Puslinch, we stroll onwards to where, at high tide, the gleam of water, that is no longer fresh, may be seen between the trees. What a pretty peaceful spot it is! And yet, even here, the sympathetic mind will feel a touch of sadness. For by the roadside is set a little stone cross, inscribed with the initials of a workman on the Puslinch estate, who, some years since, was killed at this spot by a falling tree.

If there be any god or goddess of the Yealm, he or she must feel ill-pleased at the small amount of attention bestowed upon that river. Nobody seems to care much for these lower waters of the Yealm; yet they are very beautiful—as beautiful, I think, as any in Devon. Luxuriantly-wooded slopes border the upper part of the estuary, rising, as the sea is approached, into lofty headlands. High up among the trees you catch sight of some gentleman's seat, or, by the shore, the reflection of a picturesque boathouse trembles in the green water. Nor

do we want for life or sound. There is the stately heron, the gray gull, the white swan, even the cormorant, while all around 'the voice of the turtle is heard in the land.' Creeks branch out in different directions—Puslinch where the river meets the sea, Kitley fringed by woods, Coffleet running up to Ford, and of doubtful fame, for about it lurk, I am told, a gang of poachers, who, notwithstanding their dress, which is more picturesque than that affected by the scamp of these latter days, are unappreciated by the landowner, and are thorns in the flesh of the gamekeeper. Opposite Wembury House, which commands a splendid view of moor and wood and water, a fragment of ruin on the foreshore adds to the romance of a scene which partakes more of the nature of a lake than of a river.

Now, no one can see all this without a boat, for no road commands the estuary thoroughly. And a boat can be had at Newton Ferrers for a mere song. Of course, you must go to Newton Ferrers to get it, a walk of four miles from Yealmpton, along the not very interesting road that runs along the top of the high ground above the eastern shore. But when you have reached Newton Ferrers, you will not regret the labour, but will acknowledge, as you descend the steep hill to the wooded creek which branches up to its ancient cottages, that you have reached one of the prettiest corners of this western land. High up on this side of the creek is the venerable church of the Holy Cross; opposite on a slope still steeper above the hamlet of Noss Mayo is the new church of St. Peter the Fisherman, built by Lord Revelstoke at a cost, they say, of £30,000—gorgeous within with alabaster, coloured marbles, and elaborate woodwork. It is very beautiful, doubtless, but the ancient building where the fisherfolk of Newton worship—for they are mostly fishermen—is to my mind far more interesting. Let us look in as we descend the hill to the Dolphin, a little water-side inn

with a tiny sanded parlour where no cat could be swung with safety.

It is a grand old church, and has been restored with great judgment. The oldest part is, as usual, the chancel, which has a very fine Early-English window with graceful shafts separating the lights. Beneath is a marble reredos with panels representing the expulsion from Eden and the Annunciation. There are also handsome sedilia and a graceful trefoil double piscina. The font of local marbles and alabaster from Blue Anchor in Somerset is becoming quite celebrated, so massive but elegant are its proportions. The parclose screens are of carved oak, and the panels of the pulpit are filled with painted figures of saints.

Below the church lies the village, for the most part hugging the water-side. It is worth while to walk right through it and along the path above the low cliffs down to the mouth of the creek, where you will have a lovely view of Yealm Pool, a semicircular sweep of estuary just within the headlands which guard the mouth, and of slopes which are, at any rate on one side, covered with thick woods. Under these woods lies the Plymouth steamer waiting for the passengers which an hour or two since were put on shore hard by the rocky point, and whose forms are now and then visible across the water as they loiter along the road beneath the woodland.

You should cross by the ferry, too, to Noss, which is shorter than going round by Bridgend at the top of the creek, and climb the hill past the new church, where another prospect presents itself, and you look down from a height of two or three hundred feet upon the primitive cottages of Newton Ferrers on the one hand, and the dwellings of Noss upon the other. If it be low-water, I recommend you to approach Noss no nearer. Constantinople from the Bosphorus is a fine city, but Constantinople from its inner recesses is not quite so charming—to him

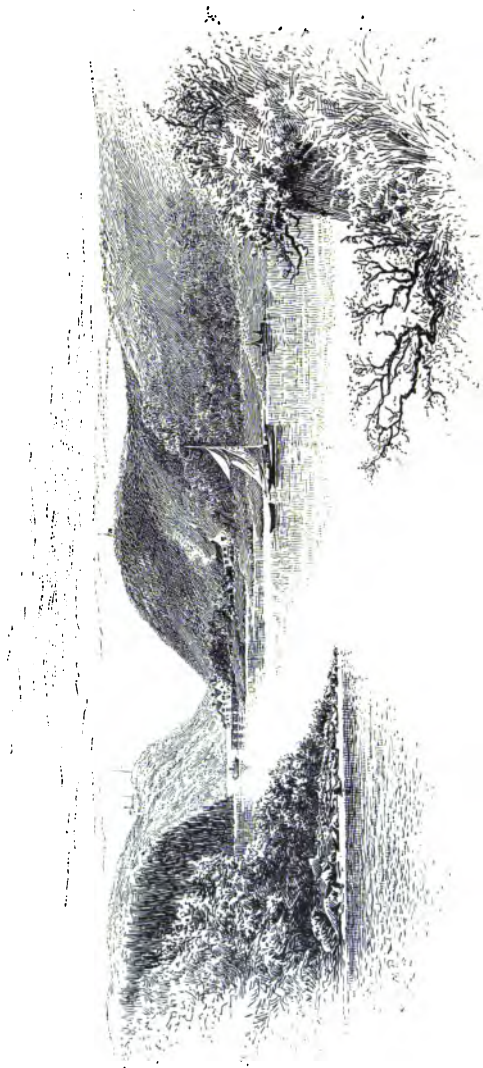
who owns a sensitive nose. And Noss suffers from the same complaint. At low-tide the smells are abominable.

And now for the steamer which, in this railwayless land, forms a pleasant connecting-link with Plymouth. The trip is breezy and pleasant—too breezy perhaps for those who do not boast a good pair of ‘sea legs,’ for between the great slabs of slate at Stoke Point to the east of Yealm Mouth and the Breakwater the coast lies exposed, and it requires a very little to stir up a lusty bit of sea. Voyagers over these four or five miles of salt-water, familiar with the verses of Barry Cornwall, must often have echoed her lines with feeling :

‘Old majestic sea !
Ever love I from *shore* to look on thee,
And sometimes on thy billowy back to ride,
And sometimes o’er thy summer breast to glide,
But let me *live* on shore.’

The steep hills that guard the narrow river mouth form a frame for the conical islet called the Mewstone, and as the steamer twists out of the estuary and comes suddenly upon the bold mountainous form set in the glittering sea, the effect is beautiful. The Mewstone looks well in all weathers ; but give me an evening effect when the sun, getting low over the Cornish hills, touches the waves with crisp lights, and the islet turns a soft blue—so soft that it almost looks transparent. This is how I last saw the Mewstone, and the memory is yet present with me.

Presently we are off the low, sharp nose of Staddon Point, the eastern horn of Plymouth Sound. Across the water rise the more graceful forms of the western headlands, Penlee Point and the peaked Rame crowned by the ruins of a chapel, whence St. Germanus, to whom Rame parish church is dedicated, took his celebrated stride across to the shores of Brittany. Close at hand the dangerous Shagstone rears its head from the breakers. That fragment of wreck, against which the wash of the steamer breaks into a thousand glints, is all that remains



YEALM POOL. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED, FROM A SKETCH BY J. LL. W. PAGE.

of the P. and O. liner *Nepaul*, which struck there one foggy night a year or two ago. Fortunately it was a dead calm, there was no panic, and not a life was lost.

And now opens out the beautiful bay. Here is the breakwater opposing its long low wall to the Atlantic surges, a lighthouse at one end, a beacon at the other. There, beyond, are the woods and lawns of Mount Edgecumbe, most beautiful of domains; and beyond that again the tower of Maker Church sharp against the sky. Passing between the eastern end of the breakwater and the forts under Staddon Heights, we glide into stiller waters.

CHAPTER X

THE PLYM AND THE MEAVY.

The Hoe—Plymouth—The Citadel—The Barbican—St. Andrew's Church and the Guildhall—The Plym—Laira Bridge and Saltram—Long Bridge—Plympton and Sir Joshua Reynolds—Bickleigh Vale—Shaugh Bridge—Shaugh—An Old Cross—Shaugh Hill—The Dewerstone and its Poet—Cadaford Bridge and the China Clay Works—Trowlsworthy Tors—Shell Top—Grimgrove—Dilsworthy Warren—A Large Pound—Dean Combe—Lether Tor—The Meavy Valley—Antiquities near Harter Tor—Crazywell Pool—A Legend of Piers Gaveston—The Plymouth Leat and Sir Francis Drake—Ye Fyshinge Feaste—Sheepstor—Merchant's Cross—Meavy and its Oak.

THE distance from Yealm mouth is so short that we have scarcely had time to take in half the points of Plymouth Sound, which has been described as 'the most beautiful estuary on the English coast.' But the Hoe is, so to speak, a ship on dry land. Its breezy turf, 100 feet above the waters, command a better view of the bay than any that can be had from the deck of a ship; no obstacle breaks the view, save a few monuments. There is one, and a fine one, to Drake, and another to commemorate the Armada; and there is the tower of the old Eddystone Lighthouse, in part removed from the dangerous rocks out beyond the breakwater, whence rises from the haze the tall column of the new Pharos.

What a bright prospect! Inside the breakwater lie vessels of nearly every rig European—the great troopship with sides painted white for foreign climes; the equally huge ocean liner, full-rigged ships, barques, brigs, schooners

from each and every nation dot the waters below. Under the shelter of the heights, further in, lie a sprinkling of ugly colliers, the 'beauty spot' of the scene, now and then hidden from view as one of her Majesty's training brigs, with white canvas spread, passes between us and their lumbering forms, or the red sails of a file of fishing-boats returning to the quays of the Barbican below the citadel there glide over the rippling waters. A handsome steam-yacht lies under the rocky island that bears the name of Elizabeth's boldest 'sea-dog,' *Drake*, and a crowd of smaller fry, cutters' yawls and gay pleasure-boats, swing at anchor off the Promenade Pier, or fly across the surface of the Sound like big seamews. There is, indeed, an incessant coming and going.

The town of Plymouth lies behind the Hoe, and this must shut off the sea breezes rather more than is desirable. At any rate, it is about the hottest place in Devonshire, and that, with mild Torquay and milder Salcombe, is saying a good deal. But the relaxing air and the everlasting glare from the limestone do not appear to affect its citizens. Plymouth is a lively place, far ahead both in size and population of the staid metropolis on Exe, and yearly growing in size and importance. I know no streets more cheerful than those of this good old town; the sombre blacks and grays in which we Englishmen are pleased to clothe our proud forms are here agreeably relieved by the naval and military uniforms that everywhere abound, for it goes without saying that soldiers congregate in Plymouth almost as much as sailors.

It also goes without saying that it is a town with a history. Long before Devonport (of old called Plymouth Dock) and Stonehouse, its sister towns, were heard of, Plymouth was known to fame, notwithstanding Leland's statement that as late as the reign of Henry II., it was 'a mene thing, an inhabitation of fishars.' In those days,

by the way, it was not Plymouth at all, but Sutton—*i.e.*, South Town, an appanage of Plympton Priory. The old name still survives in Sutton Pool by the busy Barbican. It did not become Plymouth till the fifteenth century. For many hundred years has it been, as it were, a component part of the history of England. And could the limestone bluff on which the citadel stands find a voice, it could tell of moving scenes. Of how, from the bustling harbour beneath, it saw the Black Prince sail for France; of how, alas! it also saw the French foe smarting with the blows of Crécy and Poitiers sacking the prosperous town, and the waters of Sutton Pool reflecting the flames of the 600 houses which in 1403 were fired by the wild Bretons. It has seen the gorgeous flotilla that bore Catharine of Arragon drop anchor below, and it has witnessed the mustering of the keels that lay in wait for the Armada, the while Drake and his captains played at bowls on the Hoe hard-by, and would ‘finish their game and beat the Spaniards too.’ And, if for naught else, Plymouth will always be famous for its association with such heroes as the great circumnavigator and his allies, Hawkins, Raleigh, Frobisher, Oxenham, and the rest. And this rock has looked down upon the sad broils of civil discord, Englishmen fighting against Englishmen, father against son, a man’s foes they of his own household. For in the Civil War, Plymouth was deeply involved, and endured a continuous succession of sieges and blockades for its adherence to the Parliament. But the Royalists had to confess to failure: Plymouth repelled the King’s forces, and held out for the Parliament to the last. This citadel itself, is it not a mark of royal appreciation of its obstinacy? Charles of merry memory knew very well why its walls were reared—*not* to fortify the town, but to keep in order the turbulent subjects within it.

By all means visit the old fortification, for the walk

round its ramparts is very pleasant. It has a rather imposing gateway, too, bearing the date 1670, and adorned with sculptured military trophies and other ornaments affected by that period. Not satisfied with the royal arms flanked with 'C. R.,' the architect has, in addition, statues of the lion and the unicorn not 'fighting for the crown,' but sitting peacefully on their respective haunches on the entablature to the right and left of the circular pediment which forms the top. The massive chains which formerly raised and lowered the drawbridge still remain.

The circuit of the ramparts must be a good half mile, and you will get a variety of views of the Sound of Mount Edgumbe and of Maker Heights, besides a commanding panorama of the town and the harbour below. Of the town the most conspicuous feature is the new Guildhall, of which the slender tower rises nearly two hundred feet above the busy streets, and half that height above the handsome Perpendicular tower of St. Andrew's Church, adjoining, which, with the exception of the walls we are now standing upon, is pretty nearly all that is left of old Plymouth. One gets a good idea of the size of the town filling the hollow and stretching up over the hills towards the misty moorland slopes beyond. And inside Mount Batten and its stone pier thrusting a long arm into the bay, is the mouth of the Plym—the river which we shall presently ascend—with the buff-coloured houses of Turn-chapel across the water, and on either side of a creek on the eastern shore the hamlets of Oreston and Hooe.

Up to our ears, if the day be still, rises the hum and chaffer of the Barbican quay, where the boats are lying in a long tier, while their masters dispose of the fish lately drawn from the waters outside the breakwater, and far up and down the coasts of Devon and Cornwall. This Barbican is well worth a visit, and a pleasant hour may be spent loitering there, and about the still waters of

Sutton Pool with its fisher boats and fishing-nets. I said just now that St. Andrew's Church and the Citadel were almost the only parts left of old Plymouth, but there are some interesting-looking Elizabethan houses in certain of the streets about the Barbican, particularly, if I remember rightly, in Notte Street, and in the steep street leading up into the town.

At the top of this latter thoroughfare is St. Andrew's Church, a fine and spacious Perpendicular building, the unbroken arcades—for the aisles run to the extreme east end—producing an appearance of great length and dignity. There is something very massive about the heavily-carved capitals of the granite pillars, something very rich about the dark oak roof with its gilded bosses, and in the angel corbels of the chancel. There is a gorgeous mosaic reredos, and the bench-ends, though new, are well carved. Altogether, the church is a fit sepulchre for the heart of the Warrior-Admiral Blake, which has lain here for more than two hundred and thirty years. Adjoining the church is an ancient priest-house, now no longer devoted to uses ecclesiastical.

The church forms one side of the square, of which the other three are bounded by the municipal buildings, the post-office, and the Guildhall. This Guildhall can boast of no antiquity, having been opened but nineteen years, but is none the less the finest building in the town. Its architecture is Early English, and the exterior adorned with some fine carving and statues. The length of the interior is 145 feet, the breadth is 85 feet, and it is 70 feet high. The pillars are monoliths of polished granite. There is a magnificent organ, and the windows are filled with stained glass, illustrating the history of the town. We may well agree with the local historian who says that it is 'one of the most important structural developments of civic life that has been erected in this country during the present century.'

And now we must leave Plymouth with its limestone heights, its public buildings, and its busy streets—one of them probably the longest and straightest in England—and its memories of the past, and commence our ramble along the banks of the river that has given to the town its name.

The estuary of the Plym is seen at its best from Laira Bridge, a structure of iron that carries the highroad from Plymouth to Modbury across its waters. This bridge was erected by the first Lord Morley, who lived, as does his descendant, at the mansion of Saltram among the woods on the east side of the river. Without

‘Saltram’s pensile woods,’

as the poet Carrington calls them, these lower waters of the Plym would be rather uninteresting, for the opposite shore of the estuary is flat; and at low-water not even the woods redeem the Laira, as the piece above the bridge is called, from tameness, for there are hundreds of acres of mud, through which the stream pursues a devious course to the Cattewater.

The mansion of Saltram is immense. It is not, however, its proportions which will attract the visitor—that is, if he has any trace of art in his composition—but the renowned picture-gallery, which probably contains more specimens of the works of the old masters than any other mansion in the West. Titian, Correggio, Rubens, Guido, Carlo Dolci, Carracci, are a few of the mighty painters whose works adorn the walls. There, too, may be seen examples of Cuyp, Sassoferrato, Caravaggio, Poussin, Salvator Rosa, Andrea del Sarto, and several others, besides many by more modern artists.

The present house was erected by Lady Catherine Parker about 170 years ago. Two centuries before that Saltram belonged to the notorious Sir James Bagge—

'the bottomlesse Bagge,' as he was called, on account of his insatiable rapacity. Compared with the unenviable acts of this individual, the deeds of the Parker family stand out in strong contrast. The first of them who bore the title of Earl Morley, not only built the Laira Bridge, but reclaimed a large part of the foreshore, shutting off the tidal waters by a great embankment, which work gained for him the gold medal of the Society of Arts. 'He also,' says Mr. Worth, 'became the first Chairman of the Port of Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, the oldest in England—an office since continuously held by his son, and now by his grandson, the present earl.'

Passing along the western shore by a road running parallel with the old tramway, which, before the construction of the Princetown Railway, brought down granite from Dartmoor, we reach Longbridge, at the head of the estuary, four miles from Cattewater. Within a couple of miles of this bridge, though no longer on the Plym,* is the ancient town of Plympton, under which name are generally included the town of Plympton Earl and the adjoining village of Plympton St. Mary. Both are worth the little *détour*—the former interesting as one of the Stannary towns of Devon, and as the birthplace of Sir Joshua Reynolds; the latter for its church. The school where Sir Joshua was educated—his father being headmaster—is still standing, a quaint seventeenth-century building, with a portico and cloister, or piazza; and in keeping with it is the Guildhall, a still older building, dating from the reign of James I. On a knoll above the town are the ruins of one of the castles of the Courtenays; only the keep, built by the doughty Baldwin de Redvers, now remains, the fortress having been in a state of decay ever since 1136.

* However, 'within the last three centuries the upper waters of the Plym estuary were navigable to the castle.'—Worth's 'South Devon.'

As I have already written of these little sister towns* (the joint population does not exceed 5,000), I shall not have much more to say about them here. I cannot, however, leave the church of St. Mary without recurring, however briefly, to a visit paid one autumn evening not long since. My visit was a moonlit one. The beautiful Perpendicular tower was bathed in silvery beams; so, too, was the whole of the south aisle, the battlements standing out in strong relief against their own shadows. On one side every point of the crocketed pinnacles was tipped with white light; on the other they were black as ink. From within the soft swell of music lent its enchantment to the scene; while the yellow light, a warm contrast to the colder beams without, showed in bold relief the elegant tracery of the Decorated east window.

Almost from Longbridge up to Dartmoor the valley of the Plym is densely wooded, and after a short distance becomes a winding glen. Before reaching this glen there is nothing very remarkable in the scenery except a tall grassy knoll, crowned by one of the outlying forts which on this side guard the approach to Plymouth. Like other rivers that are Dartmoor born, the Plym is very restless, and scampers over its rough bed in true Devonian fashion. The real beauty of the scenery commences at Plym Bridge, another of those granite structures whose massive proportions present so bold a front to the rush of the moorland stream. Hence right up to Shaugh, where the Meavy flood swells its volume, our river is practically invisible to those who are unable on one of the three days in every week in which Bickleigh Vale is open to follow the footpath winding through the woodland moorwards. To these my advice is to stick to the Tavistock Railway as far as Bickleigh Station—the Great-Western, not South-Western, line—which runs high above the glen; and if it does not always command the river itself,

* *Vide* 'An Exploration of Dartmoor.'

opens up the valley down which it runs, besides giving you views over the tree-tops to the wild moor beyond—views that to the wanderer below are entirely lost. Besides, it must be confessed that these densely-wooded vales are terribly hot travelling. Very often there is scarcely a breath of air save that created by the rush of the river—what Wordsworth calls ‘the breath of the waterfall’—and on a close day the insects are intolerable. Still, the beauties of the walk are such that thousands have, and for all time will, put up with these pests; while the number of picnic-parties that may be met with on a summer’s day show that the men and maidens of Plymouth reckon the delights of Bickleigh Vale at their proper value.

Perhaps the loveliest bit on the whole ramble is about Shaugh and the hoary bridge, deep-seated in the woods, themselves less green than the mossy boulders among which the river rushes down the glen. So thick is the foliage above, below, and all around, that you little know what is at hand; but cross the river and climb the path towards Shaugh ‘church town,’ and you will look upon scenery which no other southern county can show. There, in the fork of the Plym and Meavy, rears a bold hill, its lower parts wooded, its upper heights bare moor. Look up the Meavy Valley northward—it is wooded thick; look down the Plym Valley southward—it is wooded too; but not all wood. Here and there great bastions of rock peep out, and if we turn into the valley to the right here will open up ‘a spectacle of savage grandeur unsurpassed in South Devon.’ Pity it is that this gracious meeting of Meavy and Plym should be marred by the works of man! A hideous chimney stack rises right over against the peninsulated hill, and staring pools of china clay draw the eye, *volens volens*, from the contemplation of Nature’s charms. In days of yore the dark huntsman and his spectral hounds were heard in the midnight

storm above the Dewerstone. They are gone now—commerce has been too much for them.

Let us continue our ascent to Shaugh, or *Shah*, as it becomes in the mouth of the villagers. Shaugh, or, to give it its full name, Shaugh Priors, is a genuine moorland village, standing high on the very edge of the moor. Indeed, the moor is reached before the village, the road passing through a bit of common strewn with granite masses. There is but a handful of cottages, and over them the tall tower of the church, crowned with massive crocketed pinnacles, rises against the sky. Across the valley there is another tower, almost precisely resembling it, that of Bickleigh; while Sheepstor, which we hope to reach by-and-by, may have been, and probably was, constructed on the same design. There is nothing striking within the church, except the cover of the font, a lofty spire of carved oak.

The inhabitants of Shaugh must be nearly as poetical as those of Aveton Giffard. Scarcely a tombstone but has its couplet, some of them very quaint. These Devonshire churchyards may be considered happy hunting-grounds to the searcher for epitaphs. But at Shaugh the poet was abroad before the schoolmaster. The spelling is peculiar. The versifier, for instance, who framed the epitaph on Sarah Maddock makes her say,

‘My heart did *ake*, my heart did *pane*.’

Here for the second time in our wanderings we come upon one of those rude granite crosses of which Dartmoor possesses so many. It will be found just above the church, built into the wall of the vicarage, and is about 5 feet high.

From the rocky hill behind the village there is a very fine view of the country to the south and west: to the south over the rich country undulating away to Plymouth, to the west as far as the Tamar valley, and beyond to the

blue hills of Cornwall. Moorwards the striking tors above the Meavy are in full view, with others still loftier in the background, the highest, Great Mis Tor, 1,760 feet high, crowned with great masses of rock. On the skyline between Lether Tor and Sheepstor, stands out the tower of Princetown Church. Further to the left, over the white villas of Yelverton, another church may be descried on the summit of the volcanic Brent Tor, now separated from the moor by cultivation. The colouring of this noble panorama is rich in purples, blues, and greens, and against this carpet stand forth the gray pinnacles of the church tower, splashed with lichens silvery and orange.

Few will deny that the valley beneath this Shaugh Hill is the grandest thing on the course of the Plym. The river courses down a wild ravine or glen four or five hundred feet deep, its steep and occasionally precipitous sides partly barren and strewn with granite boulders, partly wooded. The rock pinnacles across the torrent are particularly imposing, contrasting as they do with the foliage from the midst of which they spring. There, close to the meeting of Plym and Meavy, is the Dewerstone, a fissured cliff rising 300 feet straight from the water, festooned with ivy and trailing plants, but alas! with quarries at its base. Whatever would Carrington, poet of Dartmoor, he who spent so much time on this crag, have said to this spoliation? What would he have said, too, if he could have seen the appalling monument to his genius which some admirer or admirers proposed to erect on the cliff-top? A woodcut of this architectural monstrosity is before me at this moment. It is a kind of modern cromlech, surmounted by the conventional urn, and containing within a pedestal supporting a bust of the poet. Fancy such an erection on the Dewerstone! I do not know who vetoed the proposal, but he has the warmest thanks of every lover of Dartmoor.

Following a cart-track at the back of Shaugh Hill, running parallel with the conduit of the china clay works, we hold on our way moorwards, the voice of the invisible river rising rhythmically from the depths below. This cart-track leads through a wood, presently emerging on a clearing where the oak coppice has been lately felled. Getting into the fields beyond, we reach a farm near the river, which here at the head of the glen once more comes into view, and, taking a lane to the right, come out upon the road from Ivybridge to Tavistock, near Cadaford Bridge.

And now Dartmoor is before us. The 'wild and wondrous region' of the poet stretches away ridge after ridge, unbroken by cultivation for miles. There are no striking tors close at hand, but the heads of Sheepstor and Lether Tor peer over the uplands westward, peaks that have few equals between Okehampton and Ivybridge, between Tavy Cleave and Buckland Beacon. But although cultivation is absent, we have not yet escaped commerce. On either hand great white heaps rise from the fern and heather, wheels revolve within gaunt, compass-like framework, and trams rumble along the rough and ready lines of the china clay* works. Yet the noise is not discordant; the situation forbids that. Shut in by no hills, but, on the contrary, begirt by wild open moorland, the clank of machinery, the rumble of wheels die almost before they are born, swallowed up by the vast space.

Cadaford, commonly called Cadover Bridge, is a plain granite structure of modern date, and of no particular beauty. But it—or, rather, its name—has been the cause of much contention. Carrington and others having referred to this part of the river as the Cad, many insist

* China clay is the felspar of the granite which has become disintegrated and decomposed. The works at Lee Moor, between Cadaford Bridge and Cornwood, are very extensive.

that Cad is its name, and point triumphantly to certain traces of aboriginal fortification in the vicinity in confirmation of their assertion. For *Cad*, say they, is in Celtic a battlefield; the battlefield has given its name to the river. *Cadworthy* Farm is the battle-place (here they have grafted Anglo-Saxon on to Celtic). *Cadaford* Bridge is the ford on the Cad; and last, but not least, the mouth of the river is *Cattewater*, and the hill above it *Cattedown*. Against all this it is strange that the source of the river remains *Plym* Head. Into the discussion I decline to intrude; but the poor *Plym* has my sympathies, and, considering that in its short course of twenty miles it has to bear three names—*Plym*, *Cad*, and *Laira*—the only wonder is that it races down from the ‘battlefield’ so cheerily.

And now farewell for awhile to ‘the madding crowd’s ignoble strife.’ Yonder lies the moor, and, with due heed to the bogs, which are pretty thick hereabouts, let us continue our travels to the head waters of the *Plym*. Above it on the right are the tors of *Trowlsworthy*, cresting opposite ends of a straight ridge. These tors are celebrated for their red granite, the only considerable outcrop on Dartmoor, the working whereof has made them even more ruinous than the convulsive throes of Mother Nature and the unsparing hand of Father Time. To the archæologist they are also known for the prehistoric remains which will be found among the confused granite masses on their southern and western slopes. These consist of a pair of avenues, ending in sacred circles and a large pound, with a peculiar entrance, barred by the remains of walls built rather after the fashion of a turnstile.

There is, indeed, plenty to occupy the antiquary in this neighbourhood. The *Plym* itself passes for miles through traces of mining operations of an age that it is impossible even to guess at with any accuracy, while the hillsides are

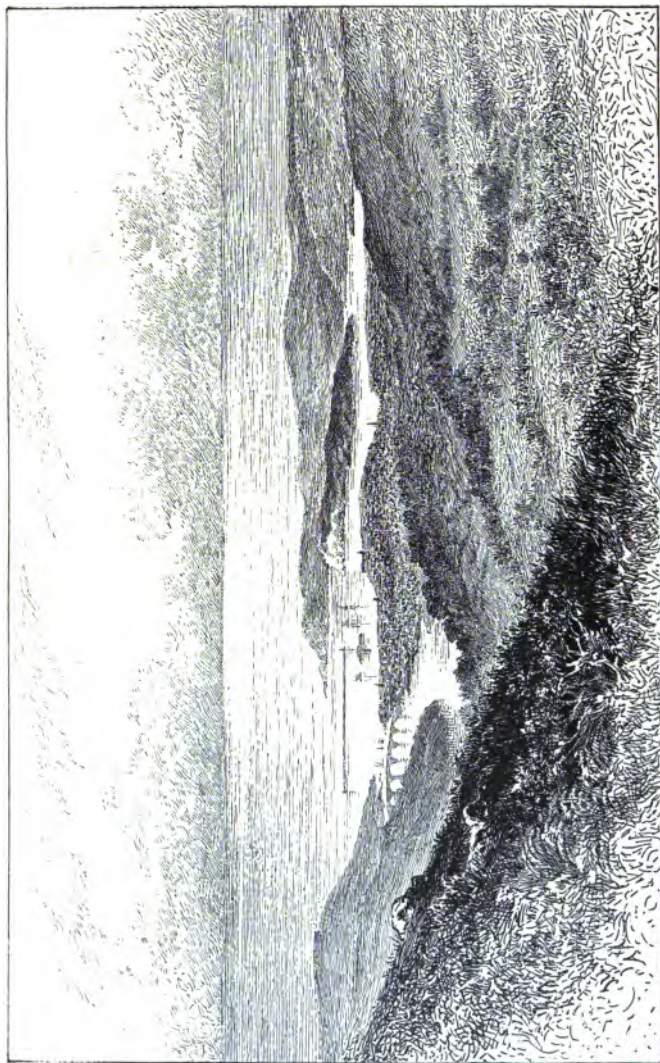
more than once marked by the rings of pounds and hut-circles. No river on Dartmoor appears to have borne so large a population, and there is something almost of melancholy in the aspect of the bare valley down which it runs, bordered by lines of débris, and the shapeless ruins of blowing-houses that may date, for aught I know, from the days of Julius Cæsar.

Instead of following up the Plym direct, let us take a 'breather' over the moors above it. Do you see that boss on the high ground above, beyond and to the right of Trowlsworthy Tor? That is Shell Top, once more picturesquely called Pensheil, the highest point this side of Dartmoor, and commanding, perhaps, the finest view upon it. A little out of our course to-day, we must pass it by; but as it would be a pity to miss the panorama spread out beneath these southern heights, we will make for a point midway between it and Hen Tor, the peaked eminence rising on the side of the hill and at the back of Trowlsworthy Tor. It is a pretty stiff pull, I can tell you; but here again, if you are archæologically inclined, you may go a-hunting antiquities *en route*. I do not think you will find the ruined cromlech under Hen Tor, but you will not have much difficulty in discovering a pound on each side of it containing hut-circles. Passing above all this, we steer for a little 'tump' of rock standing out against the sky, pressing onwards and upwards through tedious grass and heather.

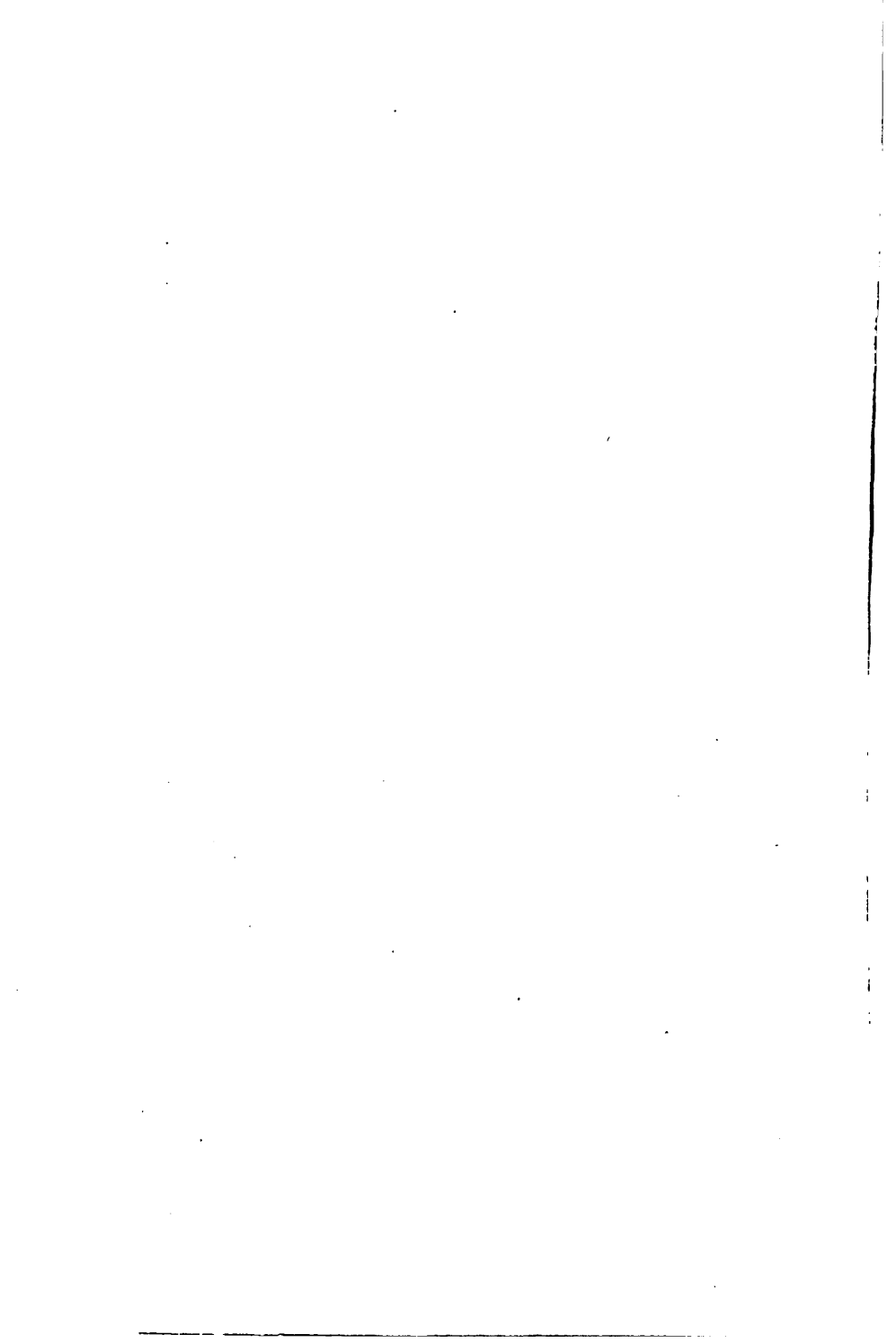
I doubt whether any prospect in England presents more contrasts than that from the rock behind Shell Top. On one hand a howling wilderness, on the other almost a garden. The eye naturally turns first to the long strip of sea beyond the mouth of the Plym, where Laira Bridge looks a mere toy, to the thin line of the breakwater, then to the spires of Plymouth, scarcely distinguishable at this distance from the buildings above which they rise. And there again is Mount Edgcumbe and Maker Heights,

and a bit of Mount Wise, too, over the roofs of Devonport. But what are those lakes beyond, towards the Cornish border? Lakes they are not, but reaches of the Tamar, Tavy, and Lynher framed by the green wooded hills. No wonder our British forefathers gave the river last-named the name it still bears—*Llyn Hir*, the long lake. What struck them two thousand years ago strikes us still. Devonians often lament the absence from their county of sheets of water; a stranger crossing Dartmoor from the northward and coming suddenly upon this view—these seven apparent lakes beneath him—would scarcely understand the complaint. There is nothing like it south of Westmorland.

And now look behind. The desert rolls away wave after wave into the distance, here smooth as a Russian steppe, there with a summit of fantastic granite. Of these tors you can count a score or more; there is Mis Tor, with the clouds resting on its crags: Staple Tor, with its tall pinnacles—unromantically compared to gateposts; whale-back Cock's Tor; dark Hisworthy. Nearer is the bolder though less lofty form of Lether Tor, steepest on the moor, and massive Sheepstor marking the valley where Meavy flashes downwards to join the Plym. In another direction you can see the chine where the hills fall away into the valleys of the Yealm and Erme, and beyond the great hill of Three Barrows, and the tumuli on the Western Beacon above Ivybridge. How dark and grim it all is this overcast day, and yet how beautiful! And look, there is a gleam of sunlight falling athwart Peek Hill, turning it to gold, while the tor close by remains dark-blue. Presently the sun breaks through altogether, and a race of cloud-shadows commences further out upon the moor, changing the colours momentarily from dusky browns and ochres to rich reds and yellows and greens. Away over the Cranmere morasses another atmospheric change is taking place. A



PLYMOUTH SOUND, FROM DARTMOOR. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED, FROM A SKETCH BY J. LL. W. PAGE.



cloud touches Hangingstone Hill, and a gray blur blots out the ridges already dim against the northern sky.

I do not know why the ancient Briton should have almost invariably selected the hill-top as his place of sepulture, for there are tumuli even on this boggy bit of table land. As they believed, or were at any rate *taught*, the transmigration of souls, they could not have supposed that their spirits in human form would hover about their graves and gaze upon the wild moorland so beloved during life. Yet I cannot but think that some lingering hope that they would be permitted this privilege influenced them in their selection of their lofty burial-places. And one cannot help sympathizing with this idea—if such it were—of the poor savage; for to a *living* man standing upon a Dartmoor hill and breathing the purest air upon God's earth there does come, even in these latter days, when sentiment is nearly crowded out, a feeling that a sepulchre high above the toiling world, overlooked by naught but the drifting cloud, surrounded by naught but the weird vastness, the eternal silence of the moors, would be a fitting 'narrow house of death.' No ceaseless patter of feet the livelong day; no rush of train or tram-car within a yard or so of the head for ever at rest. But the fancy is foolish, and this is the nineteenth century. Let us onward.

Even on Dartmoor sentiment does not stave off hunger, and it is time we descended into the valley to seek what refreshment the warreners' houses at Dilsworthy or Trowlsworthy will furnish. So we get into Langcombe, striking a feeder of the Plym opposite the lonely grave of Grimgrove.

Grimgrove, a kistvaen with the cover fallen in, surrounded by a circle of nine standing stones, is a conspicuous object long before we reach it, the hillside on which it stands being almost entirely free from boulders. What famous man was buried here history does not say, but

that he lived many a century ago is certain, inasmuch as *Grymsgrove* is mentioned in a Latin perambulation of Dartmoor Forest made in the reign of Henry III., when it was (as it still is) a boundmark of the forest. As *Grim* is Anglo-Saxon for boundary, we may take it that the word means the boundary grave, and dismiss altogether the rather fanciful notion that it is the tomb of a heathen viking named Grim—whoever he may have been.

This Langcombe stream has been most industriously worked for tin, and at its confluence with the Plym there is quite a collection of the ruins of buildings that were once, without much doubt, blowing-houses. On the slope above these remains are a number of hut-circles, a regular settlement; and across the Plym a pound, now nearly overgrown with heather.

More and more desolate becomes the valley as we penetrate into the heart of the wilderness. On the left arises the shapeless mass of Eylesbarrow; on the right the spongy ridge called Cater's Beam, where legend tells how Childe the hunter lost his life in a snowstorm in spite of having killed and got inside the body of his horse! In this dreary land are the springs of the Plym.

He who has wandered into this inhospitable region with little or no comfort for the inner man—a foolish thing to do upon Dartmoor—will hail with delight signs of human habitation. At some distance down-stream the chimney of Dilsworthy Warren House peeps over a slope. Long before he has reached it he will find himself among the burrows, for although the hills are no longer (if they ever were) 'a refuge for the wild goats,' the 'stony rocks' most certainly are for the 'conies.' So plentiful are they that you almost tread upon them, and the warrener who rents the place from Sir Massey Lopes has his work cut out in looking after them, erecting the long barrow-like burrows, and netting them for Plymouth market.

A lonely spot this warren house, and rough withal,

both as regards accommodation and food; yet have I enjoyed no bread-and-milk like that set before me by the housewife, for Dartmoor air is a wondrous sauce. During the wild weather of March, 1891, the inmates of this dwelling—the warrener, his wife, and three children—can scarcely have had even bread-and-milk. The snow was right over the house, and for a fortnight or more their only means of exit was through a tunnel scooped through the drift. Happily there were rabbits, but numbers were killed by the severity of the weather, and owing to the depth of the snow the others were difficult to get at. The storm, it will be remembered, commenced on a Monday, and on Tuesday morning the woman was awakened by a scratching at the *bedroom* window. There on the snow was the dog, and glad enough was he, poor fellow! when the master, like Noah, ‘put forth his hand and pulled him in.’

And yet, strange as it may appear, they did not feel the cold. ‘Nivver so warm in our lives in winter-time,’ said the woman, ‘for the snow filled up every chink, and there be ’nough about the place sure-ly.’ Like the Esquimaux, they found what was for the nonce a snow-house the snuggest of habitations.

No; they do not live in luxury, these Dartmoor cottars. However cool in summer, when the fierce sun, untempered by an atom of shadow, pours down his rays, the stone floor is ‘cruel’ in winter, and the plank ceiling—albeit garnished with sides of ‘baccun’ and other provender—lets rather more air than is desirable between the joists into the bed-chamber. The great wide hearth requires a small mountain of peat to keep up even the semblance of warmth, and the shock-headed urchins must sit very near indeed to the embers if they would not be ‘scrammed.’ But in warm weather the moor farm, with its door set wide to catch the breeze coming off the tor, its slumbering fire of turf perfuming the air with its

aromatic odour, is a very pleasant resting-place, notwithstanding the occasional inroads of chicken, dogs, and even pigs. And if there be a good wide old-fashioned settle, where you can lounge while enjoying the homely fare, it is wonderful how time passes, and how reluctant you are to leave.

While talking to the warrener about the traces of mining along the Plym, he offered to show me, close to the house, one of the moulds into which the miners used to pour the metal. Unfortunately, when, having enjoyed the rest and fare aforesaid, and some good tobacco, I rose to go to the spot, he had disappeared, so that I had no opportunity of inspecting this curiosity. Others, however, may be more fortunate, and for their benefit I mention its existence.

From Dilsworthy Warren there is a breezy walk across the moors to the river Meavy. The way is solitary now, but it was not always so. More than once lately I have referred to the number of pounds and hut-circles in this part of Dartmoor. As we make our way towards Down Tor, we shall come upon another pound, and a very fine one—one of the largest, indeed, that I have seen. It appears as large as Grimspound—though this is only *eye* measurement—and is full of hut-circles, with tracklines dividing them into groups. In massiveness, however, this pound cannot compare with the great ring beneath Hameldon, the wall being composed of smaller stones, and in a condition still more ruinous. Still, it was an important settlement, and must have held a considerable population. So far as I know, no book on Dartmoor even mentions it; but perhaps this is accounted for by its isolated position, and by the quantity of heather growing both within and without. It will be found about half a mile from the warren house in a direct line between it and Down Tor.

Leaving this interesting relic of a bygone time, and

continuing on our course, we make for the head of Dean Combe, a glen that guide-books honour with no notice, but which is, to my mind, as pretty a border valley in a small way as any about Dartmoor. The rocks and 'clatters' of Combe Head and Down Tors bound it on the north; on the south the slopes are more or less wooded. Along the bottom a tiny brook

'Singeth a quiet tune,'

as it hurries on its way—now through thicket and bracken, now beneath the branches of oak, ash, and sycamore—to join the Meavy. Here is reached an apology for a road, whereby, with many a bump, the Dean Combe farmer has communication with the outer world. At the extreme head of the valley rises Eylesbarrow, looking very dark and dreary against the green foliage of the glen; at the mouth the grand shape of Lether Tor, seen through the trees, looks a very mountain. The verdure of grass and foliage, the purple and brown of the moors, the gray of the granite, are so much the prevailing tints that one is almost surprised to see a low white cliff sloping down to a wooded dingle on the southern side of the combe. This is the china clay again, and to the casual wanderer very good stuff it looks. Indeed, I am told it has been worked, but the enterprise came to naught owing to the usual drawback—lack of funds.

The road crosses a breezy bit of common strewn with some enormous rock-masses, and drops to Nosworthy Bridge and the Meavy. Here, again, Lether Tor is seen to unusual advantage, rising steep from the very brink of the river, its sharp peak high against the sky. This tor is curious, and consists for the most part of a huge 'clatter,' the blocks of which look as if they might at any time resume their travels and descend into the valley. Our Celtic forefathers were as much struck by the pre-

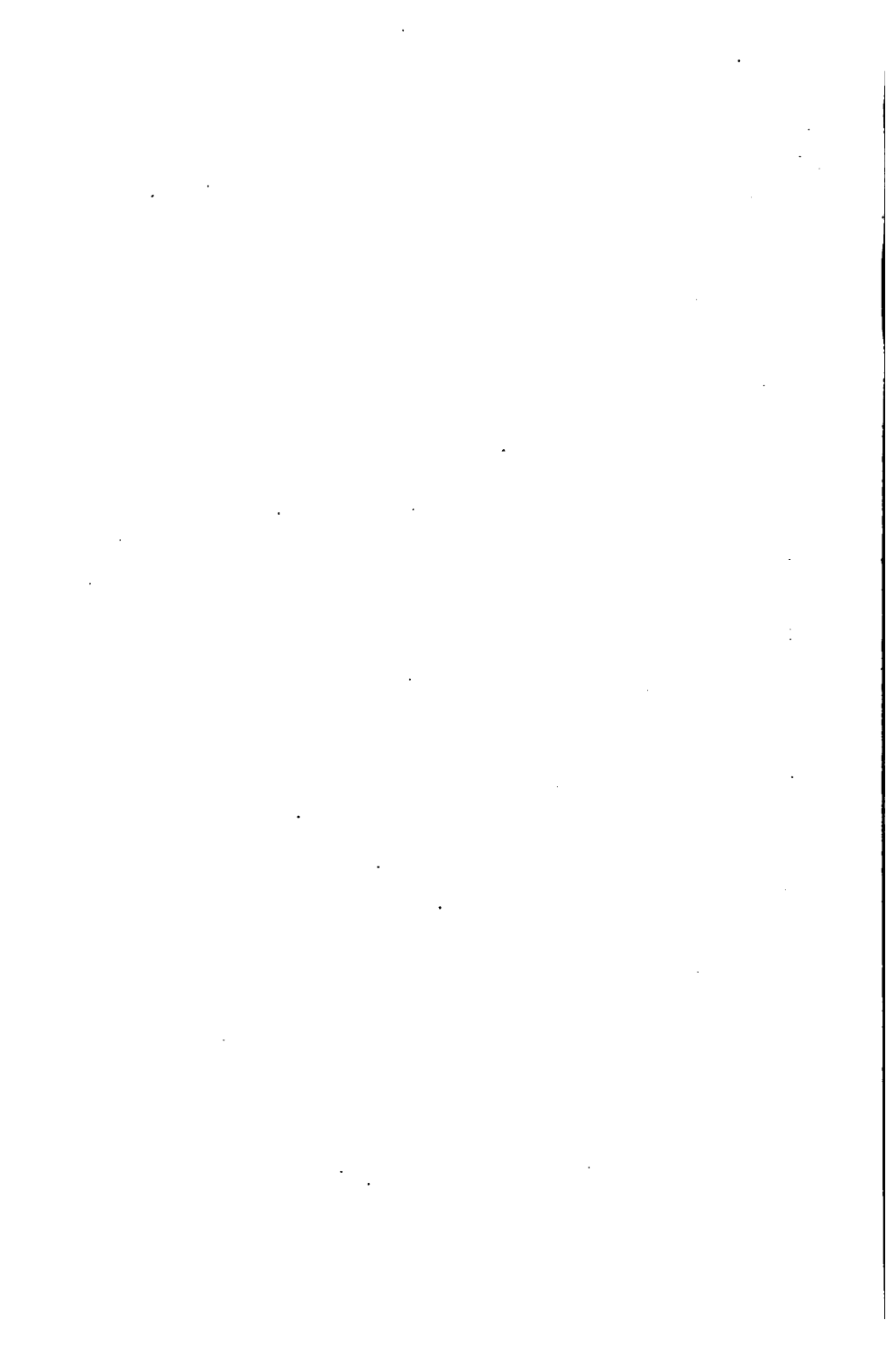
cupitous nature of this height as we are, for they called it Lledr twr, the tor of the steep slope, and the pronunciation—though not the spelling—is retained to this day.

The beauties of the Meavy Valley above the little one-arched bridge have been described by so many writers that I hesitate to transfer my own impressions to paper. It is a mixture of fertility and barrenness, the bottom, especially about Nosworthy and Stanlake, being so sheltered from the storms of the moor that the trees attain maturity without that wind-swept look so peculiar to those about Dartmoor. But the tors are the making of the valley. Nowhere on Dartmoor do they rise more grandly, though many elsewhere are loftier than those on the banks of the Meavy stream. Not to speak of Lether Tor, there is Sharper Tor, and Sheepstor, and Leedon Tor. Further up again, when we reach the head waters, are Black Tor and Harter Tor, though both are insignificant compared with their brethren further down. A very fine view of the valley may be had from a point close to where the Devonport Leat comes tumbling down the slope on the eastern side of the river, an artificial but pretty cascade. The grouping of tors seen from this point is particularly striking; they tower above the green valley like sentinels guarding the pass.

There are all sorts of antiquarian curiosities about the upper end of this Meavy Valley. If you jump across the river beneath Black Tor, which you can very easily do, and climb a few paces up the slope of Harter Tor, you will come upon an avenue—and the remains of another—leading, as usual, to cairns, besides some ruinous pounds and hut-circles. There are also many traces of the 'old men'—in fact, one of their trenches cuts right through the more perfect of the avenues. Then further south, under Cramber Tor, is Dartmoor's only lake, Clacy Well, or Crazy Well, or, as it is perhaps oftener called, Classenwell Pool. The waters fill a deep hollow,



LEATHER TOR AND THE MEAVY. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED,
FROM A SKETCH BY J. LL. W. PAGE.



probably a mining excavation, and the tarn is a picturesque object, especially when viewed from the steep bank on the north, with the mountainous form of Sheepstor rising beyond.

In his interesting work on 'The Ancient Crosses of Dartmoor,' Mr. Cossing states that there is a tradition that Piers Gaveston, the unfortunate favourite of an unfortunate king, was at one time concealed on the moor. This is likely enough, as he was lord of the manor of Lydford, to which Dartmoor belongs. A ballad by the son of Mr. A. B. Johns, the artist, relates how he waits by this pool for the witch of Sheepstor. Presently the fugitive sees her face upon the surface of the pool, and as he gazes a rush traces upon the water her prophecy :

'Fear not, thou favourite of a king ;
That humbled head shall soon be high.'

And so it was, but not for long. The words of the Dartmoor oracle, like those of the Delphic one, were susceptible of a double meaning, and although Gaveston soon again enjoyed the royal favour, his foes eventually triumphed, and his head was lifted high in another sense. Captured by the exasperated barons, he was beheaded at Warwick, and, after the barbarous fashion of the times, his head exposed upon the castle wall.

It is not very far beyond Black Tor that the Meavy has its birth, close to the highroad leading from Plymouth to Princetown. With Princetown and its great prison, sullen-looking convicts, and general air of severe grayness, we will to-day have nothing to do, but, taking up our travels again beneath Lether Tor, trace the river downwards from Nosworthy Bridge. The best way is to follow the rough track below Venny Lake Farm, till presently the point is reached where the Plymouth Leat taps the waters of the Meavy at Head Weir.

The construction of this leat is due to the energy of Sir Francis Drake,

'Who with fresh streams refreshed this towne that first,
Though kist with waters, yet did pine with thirst,'

which lines may be seen on his picture in Plymouth Guildhall. The legend of the making of this leat is ridiculous enough. The story goes that Sir Francis, mounting his horse, rode up to Dartmoor. When he had reached the spot where the leat now issues from the Meavy, he turned his horse about, and rode gaily back to the town, the water following him as the horse's tail swept the ground. Near the weir is Corporation House, where lives the official in charge of the leat. Once a year a solemn function takes place here, known as 'ye fyshinge feaste.' The Mayor and Corporation assemble in front of the house; the Borough Surveyor fills a goblet with water from the weir, hands it to the chairman of the Water Committee, who presents it to the Mayor, requesting him to drink 'To the pious memory of Sir Francis Drake.' The other members of the Corporation having in succession drunk the same toast, another cup filled with wine is presented to the Mayor by the Chamberlain, who drinks, as do the rest, to the following: 'May the descendants of him who brought us water never want wine!' The party then adjourn to the house and dine off trout from the leat, and, after drinking sundry toasts, conclude with what the programme calls 'Ye lovyng cuppes,' 'To the unity and prosperity of Plymouth.'

The walk along the side of the leat is smooth ground after that which we have lately passed over. But we do not follow it long. Presently we must leave the side of Yannadon, round which it winds, and descend through a wood and a field or two to the lane for Meavy village. But ere making this descent we shall pause more than once to take our last look for awhile of Dartmoor, for

there are many fine views of Lether Tor and the heights above Deancombe, while across the river, flowing almost at our feet down the wooded glen, the great hill of Sheepstor rises over the trees. Those who have the time at their disposal might do worse than cross the bridge and climb the hill to the weather-beaten little village, nestling beneath the tor and bearing its name. Here is the usual granite church, the tower heavy with great crocketed pinnacles touched here and there with lichen. Over the door is a pointless dial, dated 1640, ornamented with a winged hour-glass, on which rests a death's head crowned by a cap, and with corn sprouting through the mouth and eye sockets. There are three Latin sentences: *Anima resurgat; Et hora sic vitæ*; and *Mors janua vitæ*, and the initials J. E. Possibly J. E. was John Elford the Royalist, whose hiding-place, the Pixies' House, a natural cave among the granite masses on the side of the tor above, is still pointed out to the visitor, though I am afraid no one now believes that the pixies live there. At any rate, I could find never a pin, the offering which in days of yore the faithful were wont to deposit in order to insure the goodwill of the supposed inhabitants.

Sir James Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak, rests in Sheepstor Churchyard. He spent his latter days at Burrator, a mansion just below, standing in semi-wild grounds, where a little stream tumbles headlong down the steep wooded slope to join the Meavy.

To return to the lane. It presently passes close to where the river is spanned by a bridge carrying the road up over Ringmoor Down to Cadasford Bridge. A minute's walk up the hill, and on a piece of grass where the lane forks to Sheepstor we come in sight of the tallest of the ancient granite crosses of Dartmoor—Merchant's Cross. It has no base, and rises straight from the ground to the height of over eight feet. A little cross is cut upon each face.

In spite of its fine proportions, the appearance of this old monument is not so impressive as that of the crosses out on the wilds of Dartmoor. With regard to these, a feeling very much akin to solemnity takes possession of the wanderer who comes suddenly upon Nun's Cross, or even the less imposing one at Huntingdon Warren. And the great bare hills, the tors with their granite cappings, seem far more fitting surroundings for these rude monuments than do the well-trodden highway, the soft greenery of tree, and the tower of the village church almost within gunshot. These crosses are of the moor, and scarcely seem to belong to that civilization which nowadays can produce monuments so superior in elegance of form, though no more sacred perhaps in meaning than these rough memorials of the Forest.

Meavy village is famous for two things: its church and its oak; possibly the inhabitants would place the tree first. The church, however, is probably the elder, notwithstanding the tale which I shall presently repeat. It is a little Early English and Perpendicular building with an oak roof quite black with age, save where gilded bosses mark the intersections. There is a beautiful little marble reredos representing the Crucifixion, and the chancel floor is of highly polished marbles. But there are older parts than the oak roof, older even than the tower which was there before the present one. The north pier of the chancel arch is said to be Saxon, and bears the grotesque heads common to that barbaric style of architecture. The chancel was formerly lit by a small window of the same period, but this has been removed and the framework built into the exterior of the gable of the south transept. Within this framework is set a sepulchral slab which, as it is ornamented with a raised cross, probably covered the body of an ecclesiastic. It was discovered on the site of the lych-gate, and placed here for preservation. Not even the profane hand of the

Yankee tourist, so eager to clip off a 'memento,' can reach it now.

They say that the oak outside dates, like the church, from before the Conquest, and that the charter founding the church, given by Canute the Dane, makes mention of the tree. If this be true, then 'Meavy's venerable oak' is venerable indeed—in fact, about the oldest tree in England, for Canute died as long ago as 1035. Mrs. Bray, who has written so much and so lovingly about this neighbourhood, doubts not that it 'witnessed the Saxon Heptarchy, if not the Roman Conquest.' But this, I think, is a little *too* much. Still, its antiquity is manifest—in the barrenness of its boughs, in its gnarled bark, and in the great hole in the trunk, in which nine men are said to have dined together, and through which a man on horseback *did* ride, 'though,' as I once heard some cynical bystander remark, 'the horse must have been a *pony*.'

The river, after leaving the village, flows onwards down an open vale to the deeper valley immediately beneath the upland of Roborough Down. Here it turns suddenly southwards, and is soon lost in the leafy glen which stretches away to the hill of the Dewerstone, where it ends its existence, or, perhaps we should say, merges it, with the waters of the Plym.

CHAPTER XI

THE WALKHAM AND TAVY.

Roborough Down—The Princetown Railway—The Walkham—Horrabridge—Huckworthy—Walkhampton—A Cautious Innkeeper—Ward Bridge—Vixen Tor—Merivale and its Avenues—Walkham Head—Tavy Head—Tavy Cleave—Peter Tavy and Mary Tavy—Tavistock—The Great Flood—Crowndale and Drake—The Meeting with the Walkham—Grenofen—Walreddon—The South-Western Railway—Denham Bridge—Buckland Monachorum and its Church—Lord Heathfield and the Soldier—Buckland Abbey—Drake and the Devils—Monks Militant—Lophill—Cheap Refreshments—Maristowe—Beer Ferrers—The Tamar.

‘Lo ! the Walkham comes,
Swoll’n by fresh brooklets from the deep-seam’d hills.’

CARRINGTON.

IF you want to see one of the best things in the West Country, you should get up from the vale of Meavy on to Roborough Down. From Meavy there is a road thereto, more or less direct, which you can follow if by the time you reach that village you have had enough of the river : if you have not, you can come up by the lane from Shaugh Bridge, or from Hoomeavy Farm. This Roborough Down is a high open common, a good eight miles from end to end, and about two in width, facing the valleys of the Meavy and Walkham, right over against the tors of Dartmoor. The highroad from Plymouth to Tavistock runs right over it ; the Plymouth Leat gets up to it somehow, and flows along it side by side with the Devonport Leat, a longer stream, that is drawn from the Blackabrook, and the uncomfortably named river Cowsic,

away beyond Princetown. So there is a right of water as well as right of way over the Down, which is now almost as well known to the inhabitants of the three towns as Bickleigh Vale, or Morwell Rocks on Tamar—of which later.

For where the land falls away towards the warmer latitudes of Yelverton the merchant of Plymouth has built himself his white-walled villa under the lee of the Down, where of a Sunday afternoon he, his spouse and olive branches may betake themselves for a stroll, and peradventure some refreshment at one of the more substantial-looking domiciles, which a brother merchant, less fearful of moorland gales, has had put up upon the Down itself. Nor are the residents the only people who spread the good report of Roborough. Every train almost during the summer weather (when there is any) conveys its complement of holiday-makers to Yelverton or Horrabridge, some to wander over the Down to the Virtuous Lady Mine, or the lovely Walkham Valley about Grenofen, others to penetrate where we have just been, a few to dawdle beneath the great rock that uprears itself in the middle of the common, almost the only shade on Roborough, and thence gaze upon the spectacle of Dartmoor throbbing in the hot haze across the vales.

A good many journey on to Princetown by that queer serpentine railway that in its twists and turns about the tors makes eleven miles or thereabouts of a distance which the crow does in six. And where can you watch the little train—there are only two carriages, sometimes only one—climbing up and up to its moorland terminus, nearly 1,400 feet above the sea, so well as from Roborough Down? It really is most interesting to watch its appearance, disappearance and reappearance, as it first steams away, pretty straight at first, and of course uphill for Dousland, then glides off under the side of Yannadon as if for Meavy, and then, after describing a great curve,

comes up over the downs again and pants away past Sharper Tor and Leedon Tor for the granite quarries below Ingra Tor and King Tor. Here is the most pronounced curve of all ; and it is said that a man jumping from the carriage as the train descends may run across the neck and be in time to meet it on the other side. Round King Tor, then, it crawls slowly, presently to reappear for the last time on the high moor beyond as it runs into Princetown Station.

I remember watching the progress of this little train under noticeable though by no means peculiar atmospheric conditions, from the Down above Horrabridge on a certain morning a few months since. Ragged masses of cloud scoured across the moor, seldom keeping free of the loftier tors, and occasionally descending in wandering fragments upon the lesser eminences. Into these the train would plunge headlong, coming out almost instantaneously until it reached King Tor, where the clouds swallowed it up, the last defiant puff of steam making a curious white blur against the gray mass.

As may be imagined, this exposed piece of railway is not pleasant to traverse in a snowstorm. Last winter the up train was snowed in for the night, and in the preceding winter the 'blizzard' attacked the down train to Yelverton and buried it. From Monday night till Wednesday morning it stuck in the drifts, and the poor passengers—fortunately they were few—were half frozen and nearly starved ere rescue arrived.

The principal points of the moor as seen from Roborough are as follows, working from left to right : The round hill covered with clatter, but with no particular prominence in rock, is Cocks Tor ; then come the pinnacles of Staple (Steeple) Tor ; then the fine form of Great Mis Tor with the crest of Pew Tor below. Next comes the whale-back outline of Hisworthy (commonly called Hessary), and, beneath, the tors round which the railway

winds, King Tor being the most shapely. Further to the right is pointed Sharper Tor, and lastly, rising over the brown slope of Yannadon, the rocky mass of Sheepstor. In any state of the atmosphere—save, of course, fog—this amphitheatre of granite hills, ‘or rather mountains,’ as Risdon hath it, presents a striking appearance; but give me the early morning, when the sun has not yet slid over these western heights, and graceful folds of vapour and white piles of cloud hang about the hill-tops uncertain what to do. Before they have made up their minds the sun and the breeze have made up theirs. The vapours vanish before the one, the clouds before the other, and sail away into the distance, turning the far-away moorland seen through the openings between the tors from sere yellow and russet and brown to blue and purple.

Let us descend into the valley of the Walkham. This, one of the loveliest streams in Devonshire, has no lengthy course. Any man who knows how to use his legs can tramp from Horrabridge to its head-waters in a summer’s day. Yet is it not a river to approach, as Agag did Saul, delicately? There is very little path, and very many boulders, not to speak of tangled woodland and an occasional bog. From ugly little Horrabridge, which illustrates, as someone has only too truly remarked, the saying that ‘God made the country and man made the town,’ we ascend by meadows to the ivy-clad arches of Huckworthy Bridge. Here is Huckworthy hamlet, set among trees at the foot of the steep road that plunges right down to the bridge from Tavistock way. On this hot July morning one wonders why the buttresses of the bridge are so deep, why the angles so pointed. Surely the feeble stream faintly murmuring below can never raise its voice to a roar. Can it not? Let the new bridge a couple of miles above testify how but a few years ago its predecessor went like a wisp of hay before the fury of a Walkham flood!

A lane breasts the opposite hill to the village of Walkhampton—or, as a few of the old folk still call it, *Wackington*—of which the stately church tower has so long been a landmark.

Walkhampton is not an interesting village, though there can be no doubt that it is a healthy one. Picturesque thatch and penthouse eaves do not answer in these elevated hamlets on the borders of the wild moor; the cottages of 'Wackington' are slated, and the slates are tarred and sanded, giving the place an appearance somewhat funereal. It is about the pleasant rectory, with its trout-stream and pool, and the church, that the charm lies. From the latter you will get as fine a view of the West Devon border-country as any this side of Mis Tor. There in the foreground is the valley we have just left, with the graceful railway viaduct of Grenofen set among the trees the other side of Horrabridge—Roborough Down, and the Cornish heights of Kit Hill and Hingston Down beyond. There, moorwards, the tower of Sampford Spiney Church rises from a sycamore-grove, with Pew Tor's gray crest behind; and further up the outposts of the shadowy wilderness, as we saw them from above Horrabridge, and, alas! near at hand now, the quarried and almost shapeless Ingra Tor, and King Tor awaiting a like fate.

The tower of Walkhampton Church is 125 feet high, and its graceful proportions make it look even higher. The crocketed pinnacles, each surmounted by a stone cross, spring from a battlemented crown. It seems strange that this exposed tower should have existed the best part of five centuries unscathed by lightning—stranger still that, with the diasters at Widecombe, Manaton, and Shaugh preaching caution, no means should have been taken to protect it from accident. It was not till Saturday, April 6, 1889, that fate overtook it. On that day a thunderstorm burst over the church, and

the north-eastern pinnacle was hurled through the roof. The fact is duly recorded on a brass near the tower arch, where it is stated that, through the mercy of God, no one was in the building at the time. The Rector's daughter, however, had left but twenty minutes previously. Now—on the principle of shutting the stable-door after the horse is stolen—a rod has been affixed, and the tower is safe.

There is little of interest in the interior—a plain structure in the usual Perpendicular; the architect, as in other cases hereabouts, appears to have expended all his energy upon the tower. There are curious heads on the western arch, and the pillars are noticeable as being, not of the usual granite, but of the softer Roborough stone, which is stained here and there with veins of iron.

Outside the eastern end of the churchyard is a church-house, bearing the date 1598, with one or two ecclesiastical-looking doorways, and a grim-looking gargoyle (?) fixed in the passage-wall. It is now an inn, and some former Boniface, with scant faith in the honesty of his customers, has suspended over a mantelpiece a board bearing the following effusion:

‘Since man to man is so unjust,
I do not know what man to trust;
I have trusted many to my sorrow,
So pay to-day, I'll trust to-morrow.’

At the spring hard by is the base of an old cross.

Down to the river again by footpath through the wheat ‘white already to harvest,’ and we reach Woodtown, the plain house where the Colliers dwell. From this point upwards the river is lovely. On either hand arise steep hills covered with trees to the sky-line, where the osmunda grows in thickets, and the air is sweet with the scent of the lemon-fern. The bed of the river is a staircase of immense boulders, over which we shall now and again have to scramble, for the undergrowth is at times

impassable. Here and there is a deep pool, hemmed in by rock masses polished smooth by the action of the winter floods, where the trout lies at rest over the granite sand, rising only to snap lazily at a fat fly, or at the deadly imitation, which shall perchance land him a struggling victim in the angler's creel.

Presently we reach Ward Bridge, a handsome modern structure erected on the site of the old bridge, swept away by the great flood of 1890. Let into the masonry is the only fragment of its predecessor, engraved with a date more than 200 years back, showing that the Ward Bridge, of which the masonry is now wedged into the crevices of the boulders far down the glen, withstood the river long.

It is very hot in this confined valley, and to leave the woodland behind and emerge upon the open moor is a welcome relief. It is lonely, too; all the way from Woodtown we have seen no cottage, no sign of life even, save perhaps a solitary angler. Now one or two cots come into sight, rough-looking dwellings placed in the shelter of a handful of wind-swept trees, surrounded by a few acres of poor-looking crofts won by much toil from the moor. On the left rises the curious pile called Vixen Tor, whether because the vixen breeds there (as some say), or from some older and long-forgotten Celtic or pre-Celtic name, I know not.

Vixen Tor is the loftiest pile of rocks on Dartmoor; but, lest it should humble its fellows, occupies the most lowly situation. No high ridge does it occupy, scarcely even a rising. Dame Nature has placed it in the valley almost on the edge of the river. I believe the tallest of the three pinnacles, or piles, or masses, or whatever you like to call them, rises more than 100 feet above the turf. There is hardly a tor on Dartmoor that does not assume a whimsical shape when viewed from some point or other, owing, of course, to the weathering of the granite; but I think a greater number of uncouth forms may be

made out of Vixen Tor than out of any other. From one spot it is exactly like a misshapen sphinx; from another it requires no great stretch of imagination to see a man in a large cloak; while from almost every point of the compass the resemblance to a ruin must strike the most casual observer.

Not very far above Vixen Tor the road from Tavistock to Princetown crosses the narrowing stream at Merivale Bridge, where some new masonry again does tribute to the power of the Walkham. Abreast of the bridge, but high above it to the right on a level piece of moorland known as Long Ash Common, are the famous stone avenues, hut-circles, sacred circle, and menhir, about which so many archæologists have theorized in vain.* At Merivale we see the last cottages; henceforward all is desolation.

A picturesque desolation, though, for a mile or two; for the river plunges noisily down a rocky valley, separating Great Mis Tor from his fellows. If you pause to look backward—as you frequently will, for the walking is of the roughest—many a bit of border-scenery delights the eye, framed in by the flanks of the tors. You will linger, too, to wonder at the enormous ‘clatter’ on the side of Mis Tor, a veritable cascade of granite. The masses pitched here, there, and everywhere down the slope speak to some mighty upheaval of days prehistoric. A block of fifty tons is nothing.

But when the corner is passed which shuts out Merivale Bridge and the moorland crofts below, the scene is very lonely—not so lonely as Cranmere, perhaps, but, still, solitary and silent as the grave. He who follows the Walkham to its founts in the boggy ground below Lints Tor will obtain (and at no very great trouble) a very fair foretaste of that feeling of abandonment which must at

* For a full account of these remains see the author's ‘Exploration of Dartmoor and its Antiquities.’

times come over every intruder upon the gloomy wastes of Dartmoor. Here no tor cuts the sky-line; slope follows slope in monotonous succession; the world—in spite of the fact that a highroad is within an hour's walk—seems far away indeed. Solitude and silence are the presiding genii of the desert.

* * * * *

It is in bolder scenery that the Tavy comes to life. Over against the dreary morass from which it issues rise the titanic masses of Fur Tor like the donjon of a great castle. The Tavy sees little of the moor proper. Scarcely three miles from its birthplace it is swallowed up in the ravine to which it gives its name, and for awhile has enough to do to find its way among the great boulders flung down from the line of tors which tower above its course. This Tavy Cleave is one of the grandest and deepest valleys of Dartmoor, and I know few things more impressive than the view beneath Ger Tor, a tremendous rock-strewn steep, rising to a great height above the stream. I have seen it in many kinds of weather, but I prefer it when the clouds are lying low on the moor behind, throwing forward its imposing form in grim majesty. Then, with Tavy swirling among the great round, water-worn boulders, and no sign of life but the stone-chat or ring-ouzel flitting from rock to rock, nor any sound save the far-off bleat of the sheep away up on the high downs across the stream, is the time to see Tavy Cleave.

But sign and sound have not always been so scanty hereabouts. Opposite Ger Tor, high above the river, are the remains of one of the largest settlements on the moor, a village, I should think, of shepherds, as there are no particular traces of mining in the immediate vicinity. There must be something like a hundred hut-circles, and the walls of several still rise a yard or more from the ground. A little to the east the green hillside is cut by

a deep gulley, and here I once saw snow of a depth seldom equalled in the South of England. In the preceding month had occurred the great snow-storm to which reference has been repeatedly made; since then the weather had been as mild and wet as it usually is in Devonshire in the months of March and April.

And yet six weeks to the day from the blizzard there lay in this gulley a drift eighteen feet deep. What can the depth have been when the blizzard ceased to rage?

What a terrible place this moor must be in a snow-storm! Small chance is there for the wanderer who is caught in the winter gale on this granite wilderness.

‘Heaven aid that hapless traveller then,
Who o’er the wild may stray;
For bitter is the moorland storm,
And man is far away.’

If he be near the borders, let him run for his life, and look not behind him; if he be ‘out over,’ woe is he. An instance at this moment rises to my memory, and that not on Dartmoor, but on Exmoor, and close to the high-road. Seventeen days had gone by since the storm before the body of poor Amos Cann was found in the snowdrift.

Be careful of the bogs below Ger Tor. They are so evident that no one need trespass within their treacherous limits unless he will. And methinks inclination, if it ever existed, will expire suddenly when I tell the man who would try the passage how the friend with whom I last visited the cleave saw protruding from these fatal ‘stables’* the head of a pony half devoured by birds of prey. There are not many dangerous bogs on Dartmoor, but there are *some*, and if the least doubt exists as to the nature of the soil, by all means give that spot the widest possible berth.

The glory of Tavy Cleave ends with Ger Tor; the

* The very suggestive name sometimes given by the moormen to the bogs, on account of the loss of ponies therein.

valley widens, and through the opening the Tavy reaches cultivation. Not much at first, for the fields have suspicious-looking rocky lumps about them, and the stunted trees in the hedges are bent all one way by the wind. But presently, after traversing a rough and winding lane past one or two moor farms, we cross Hill Bridge and follow, under the lee of the moor, the road that leads through the hamlet of Cudlippe town to where the octagonal tower of Peter Tavy (St. Peter on the Tavy) rises above the trees. Over against it, across the river, is the sister church of Mary Tavy. In this churchyard is a graceful cross and some *new* stocks—that is, they were set up well within the reign of her present Majesty to keep in awe the juvenile evildoer. Fancy erecting stocks in the middle of the nineteenth century!

And now, pretty well throughout the remainder of its course, the river is wooded either on one side or the other, often on both. It is a fine walk to Tavistock, whether you keep along the up and down lane on the left bank, or, crossing the bridge, get into the Okehampton Road. Very loth is the Tavy to lay aside its moorland character. In fact, right down to Tavistock, and even far below, it is a regular moorland stream, with cascades and eddies and deep dark pools where the salmon lie *perdu* beneath the rocky banks. For the Tavy is a noted salmon stream. 'As fine a river for peel as any in the kingdom,' said a piscatorial colonel, fishing down below the Virtuous Lady Mine. And this fact the fishing authorities recognise, by constructing salmon ladders whereby the fish may pass the weirs—a delicate attention, doubtless, much appreciated by the fish.

With the Kelly College on one side of the river, and the mansion of Mount Tavy, mostly concealed by its woods, on the other, the dark tower and white granite pinnacles of Tavistock Parish Church appear down the valley. The town fills the valley, and rises over the

westernmost hills—a goodly town showing in the ruins of its abbey traces of a high antiquity. For Tavistock was a town in Saxon times when Ordulph, son of Ordgar, Ealdorman of Devon, founded the abbey, the same being soon afterwards burnt by the irrepressible Danes. Of Ordulph's building neither stick nor stone remains. The oldest part is a fragment of an Early English cloister in the churchyard, beneath it being the tomb of Mr. Bray, a former Vicar, and an enthusiastic antiquary, who, nevertheless, believed this ruin to mark the grave of *Ordulph*. A refectory—*O tempora mutantur*!—is a Unitarian Chapel; a porch has become a hotel larder. Only in the vicarage gardens do an old gateway and a still-house remain consecrate to reverent usage. Under the archway of the former is a granite sarcophagus called 'Ordulph's Coffin.' But older than either gatehouse or sarcophagus are the three prehistoric inscribed stones at the back of the house recording the names of persons whose history is more mythical even than that of Ordgar's giant son.*

Tavistock Church is large and handsome, the two principal aisles being of equal length, with nave and chancel. The carving of the organ-case will at once attract attention, and there is an interesting monument to Judge Glanville, his wife, and children, in which the figures are life-size. There is also an elaborate one in white marble, I believe, to some member of the Fitz family, who formerly lived at the mansion of Fitzford, of which the gateway alone remains—now occupied as a cottage—at the end of the New Road. Fronting this gateway is a fine bronze statue to Sir Francis Drake; and on a knoll above a Romanesque church, a building of fine proportions, but plain appearance, given to the town some twenty-five years ago by the Duke of Bedford.

* These stones are fully described in the author's 'Exploration of Dartmoor.'

The inhabitants of Tavistock are to be congratulated upon their beautiful river walk. From the Abbey Bridge, where the waters fall over the weir, constructed to feed the canal connecting the town with Morwellham on the Tamar, a path winds along beneath the abbey walls, and through a large meadow into the road to Plymouth. Elms border it part of the way, casting a chequered shade over the river, which hurries through a rocky channel below—so far below, indeed, that it scarcely seems credible that the waters should ever reach the pathway. But Tavy is an impetuous river, and of a short temper, and has more than once treated the only town upon its banks most scurvily. Not many months since, indeed, it tried its best to wash it away.

One day, the river being more or less in flood, those looking towards the moor observed an enormous cloud of almost inky blackness gathering over the tors. Some thought it a waterspout, but no one seems to have felt any particular apprehension. Presently this cloud reached Cocks Tor, the height nearest to the town, touched its summit, and broke. In an instant the slopes of the hill were white with cataracts; every channel overflowed, every gully was filled. In a few minutes a great brown wave came roaring down the Tavy; one or two bridges went like rotten boughs before a north-wester, and presently the Abbey Bridge was full to the crowns of the arches, and it must have gone too, but suddenly with a crash the walls on either side of the river immediately above collapsed, and the triumphant flood proceeded without paying toll to take possession of the market-place, and to surround the ducal statue in Bedford Square. Then, with a loud roar, the weir went down before its fury, and stones weighing several hundredweight were washed like pebbles far down the stream. I saw one myself afterwards—a long granite coping stone—jammed between the rocks some 200 yards below the bridge. But still the waters

rose, right up over the path to the abbey wall did they swirl, and a large piece of the stone-faced bank vanished in the waters. One almost wonders that Fitzford Bridge, at the other end of the meadows, remained standing, but this bridge is a massive structure and lofty withal, and its angle buttresses flung the waters aside with fine contempt. And so the flood went roaring down the valley, men breathed again, and the waters began to subside. So sudden was the onslaught, that a man hardly knew what had happened till it was over, and he was left ruefully to contemplate the ruin left in its wake. It is related of one old fellow that, hearing the noise of the approaching flood, he left his seat and hurried out to see what was about to take place; when he returned the armchair was floating down the stream. In another case a cottage was surrounded so rapidly that the inhabitants had to be rescued by means of a ladder placed on an adjacent hedge. In a third a prisoner in Tavistock 'clink' (*i.e.*, lock-up) was dragged forth just in time to prevent his being drowned like a rat in a hole. Truly these Dartmoor rivers are of many moods, and not to be lightly trusted.

In its course through Crowndale, a mile below the town, the river passes close to the spot where Francis Drake was born. The old house is no more, and the modern farm-buildings standing on or near its site have no memories of the great sailor; nor are such memories necessary. The name of the circumnavigator will ever be honoured, not only in the West, but everywhere where Englishmen are found the wide world through.

Down the pleasant valley, the wooded hills now rising high on either side, the river flows broad but shallow, and no two furlongs alike; sometimes a rapid, sometimes a pool; here fretting against boulders, there rippling over gravel. Presently it reaches a rough piece of down ending in a rocky promontory. On the other side of this

promontory, down a valley equally deep, and perhaps even more beautiful, because more rocky, the Walkham flows to meet the Tavy. His course from Horrabridge has been below the spurs of Buckland Down, beneath the woods of Grenofen Park, and under the gray stone bridge. At this bridge is a charming spot. For a moment the stream buries its current in a deep foliage-shadowed pool, making one of the most delightful places for a dip that I know. Alas! twenty years more or less have come and gone since I last bathed at Grenofen, and bathing now does not seem like bathing then. Surely the water was warmer in those days, the sunshine brighter—at any rate, I am sure there was much more of it—and—— But dear me, I am becoming like the man who was charged with being

‘Laudator temporis acti
Se puero.’

Still, youth is a pleasant thing. Who at forty enjoys life as he did at fourteen? Wasn’t everything better when you were young? You do not care much for the sights and sounds and scents of the country now; and year by year as spring comes round you think less of them. You have lost your youth, and with it that innocent delight in the pleasures of childhood which were once, at least, half the world to you.

‘The joyous May has come once more,
With all the flowers she used to bring,
And the songsters, who as gaily sing
As they were wont in days of yore;
It seems not like the Mays to me
To which my heart would fondly cling,
Which still live in my memory—
Blest days of boyhood’s innocence,
When cowslip, daisy, and bluebell
Had charms for me! Ye’ve fled far hence,
And much with you that I loved well.’*

Grenofen is by no means the only pretty spot on these, the lowers waters of the Walkham River. A mile below,

* Rev. Edward Templeman.

where the valley becomes wilder, there is a fine bit of rock scenery. A crag rises on the side of Walreddon Down right over the stream, which even the mine beneath cannot spoil—because, happily for all but the adventurers (perhaps for them, too), it is a ruin, and as such infinitely more picturesque than in its palmyest days. It is just below this spot that the waters meet.

And a very gracious meeting it is. A down covered with bracken; a rocky promontory; beneath, the foliage of the oak, the ash, and the hazel, from above almost concealing the Walkham and the rustic footbridge spanning it. It is a pity that the rubbish heaps of the Virtuous Lady Mine should take from the attractions of this Watersmeet.

Some way up from the junction of these rivers, on the other side of the common, is the ancient mansion of Walreddon, dating from the days of Edward VI. It is (or was) one of the show places about Tavistock, and I have pleasant recollections of sundry visits thereto. There is a story that the old house at one time underwent a siege—I fancy in the Civil War—and we were wont to look with considerable respect at a cannon-ball kept upon the hall table for the admiration and awe of the visitor.

Over against the débris of the mine the Tavy has washed out a long deep pool overhung by gray cliffs and trees. Along the side of the declivity above the precipice, and at a great height from the river, runs the South-Western Railway. From this aerial line a lovely view is to be had of the valley below, and the distant line of tors, a prospect that even the most nervous passenger may enjoy, little knowing, because of the trees, where an accident would precipitate him.

Between Okehampton and Plymouth this railway line opens up scenery of very great variety. To Tavistock it commands wide views of the western frontiers of Dartmoor, and soon after leaving the elevated station at that

town it traverses the high ridge between Tavy and Tamar, giving occasional, but unfortunately too fleeting, glimpses of either valley. From the spot at which we are now looking it trends away towards the larger river, opening up a long vista of its waters below Morwell Rocks and of the hills beyond, where stands the mining village of Gunnislake and the riverside port of Calstock, with its church tower crowning the promontory above.

It would be ungenerous to leave the Virtuous Lady—who she was I know not—without paying a tribute to the blackberries that grow upon the common hard by. They are the largest and the most luscious I have ever tasted. And they are in such plenty, in nowise diminished in quantity or deteriorated in quality since those days to which reference was made just now. Elsewhere the blackberries of youth are sweeter than those of nowadays. But these Tavy blackberries are better than the best; in comparison with them others are as Dead Sea fruit. Does an early association lend to them an adventitious flavour? It may be so: *cheu fugaces*! If, unfortunately for myself and my friends, I were a poet, I am sure I could write quite a touching poem on the fruit hereabouts. Have not verses been written to a veal cutlet?

For only another mile does the Tavy preserve its transparency. The deep wooded vale through which the path now winds presently shows signs of commerce, and turning a corner, the Lady Bertha arsenic mine comes into view, discharging a flood of dirty water into the river. Fortunately, it is the only mine that does so, or the fish would have a bad time of it. As it is, the dash of poison does not seem to affect them much, and a fisherman told me that he actually preferred the river in this state, as the sharp-sighted salmon is unable to discern his foe. Below, you reach Hatch Mills and Denham Bridge, where the scenery reminds one rather of a North Country than a Western river. The stream, no longer boulder-strewn,

flows slowly between banks of rock overhung with oaks. Close by is an ivy-clad cottage. I know just such a scene on the Kent, not very far from the good town of Kendal.

From Denham Bridge two lanes (the steeper is the more direct) lead up over the hill to Buckland Monachorum—that is Monks' Buckland—for in days of yore the Cistercians had an abbey there. It is never called Buckland Monachorum nowadays, except when needful to discriminate between it and Egg Buckland, or Buckland-in-the-Moor, or the dozen or so other Bucklands scattered about the West of England. The average Englishman has no love for long names, at any rate of places, and Buckland is divorced from Monachorum accordingly.

Buckland, then, is a tidy sort of village with a down close by, where you may get air almost as good as that on Dartmoor. It has a notable church, too, with an uncommonly fine tower standing at the west end, which, when the building is cruciform, never seems to me the right place. Like most other Devonshire churches, the style of architecture is mainly Perpendicular. The symmetry of the interior is greatly impaired by the chancel arch, which appears to have been widened, and is now a shapeless monstrosity. There is a good oak roof with figures of angels; a screen under the tower, and carved bench-ends. A chapel south of the chancel has a groined *granite* ceiling with some curious bosses and monuments to the Elliot family, the principal one being to George Augustus, Lord Heathfield, who for two years held Gibraltar against the French. He died in 1793. This monument, the work of Bacon, R.A., has well-executed bas-reliefs illustrating military scenes in which his lordship figured; a life-size statue of a female in the act of hanging an escutcheon below the medallion portrait of the deceased, while at her side a sturdy boy protected but

by a helmet (reminding one of the savage whose full dress was a box hat) and grasping a huge key—presumably that of Gibraltar—in one hand and a palm branch in the other, is glaring defiance at an invisible foe. The epitaph is in the style of the time—that is, about as fulsome as it can be; and that on the monument to his son is no better.

An amusing story is told of Lord Heathfield. In his day the cocked hat was worn in the army, and it was his fancy that it should be pulled well over the brows. One day at Gibraltar he met a soldier who, poor fellow! doubtless feeling the heat, carried his hat well on the back of his poll. This was enough for the General. Thrusting his own head-gear back from the bridge of his rather prominent nose, he demanded fiercely: ‘Now, sir, don’t I look like a blackguard?’ ‘Yes, your Excellency, you *do*,’ was the unexpected reply. His Excellency, though somewhat taken aback, had the good taste to laugh, and passed on, remarking that what did not become an officer was certainly not suitable to one of the rank and file.

Buckland Churchyard can show one or two epitaphs both more amusing and more instructive than that on the marble to the brave General. Here is a quaint one, copied verbatim:

‘My Sledge and Hammer both declin’d,
My Bellows, too, have lost their wind;
My Fire’s extinct, my Forge decayed,
And in the dust my Vice is laid.
My Coal is spent, my Iron’s gone;
My Nails are drove, my work is done.’

The deceased was, of course, a blacksmith.

Another, on Thomas Wotton, who lost his life in Furze-hill Moor Mine, is remarkable for its good sense and the warning which it points to all:

‘Living *yesterday* and well,
And *to-day* hath heard his knell;
Christian, guard thee from the sorrow
Of relying on to-morrow.’

It is a pity that Buckland does not take more pride in what remains of the village cross. The church tower casts its shadow upon a neglected ruin. There is not much to preserve, certainly—only the calvary and socket stone. But this is, to my mind, hardly a good reason why the blocks of stone should be left to lie a confused heap, almost as though they had been shot out at the waggon's tail. A little mortar would at least make this ruined monument decent, and prevent it being what it certainly now is—an eyesore to the village.

Buckland Abbey, about a mile from the village in the direction of the river, was founded in 1280 by Amicia, Countess of Devon, and was a great and powerful monastery. In the reign of Henry VIII. it met with the fate of most other religious houses, passing into secular hands, and became in the time of Elizabeth the property of Sir Francis Drake. In the possession of his descendant it still remains.

Whether the devil was on the side of the ejected monks, or whether he had a special spite against Sir Francis, I do not know. But when that valiant 'sea-dog' commenced to build a mansion out of the stones of the abbey, some supernatural force removed them by night to a great distance. This happened twice, and then Sir Francis lost patience, and determined to watch for his mysterious enemy. So he climbed into a tree. At midnight a troop of little devils ascended from the earth, and with much merriment proceeded to raze the walls and remove the stones as before. Once more the workmen built the walls, and that night Sir Francis dressed himself in white, and again mounted his leafy shelter. Up came the devils as before, but when they approached the tree Sir Francis worked his arms, and yelled 'Kikkeriki!' with all his might. Even devils have nerves, and this was too much. They fled in dismay, and came no more, and so the mansion was built.*

* Rev. S. Baring-Gould in *Notes and Queries*.

With the exception of the house, which stands on the site, and incorporates portions of the Early English church, particularly the tower, the remains of Buckland Abbey have been degraded to agricultural uses. Just below the modern farmhouse is a long building of Perpendicular date, though with Early English traces, and below that is the barn, an enormous building entered by a lofty arch. Another building, now used with the stables, has a little fifteenth century tower and turret. Mr. Brooking Rowe thinks it may have been the porter's lodge, and perhaps part of the entrance-gate.

These monks of Buckland were stalwart fellows, and knew how to maintain their right otherwise than by cursing

‘By candle, by bell, and by book.’

There was a wood by the Tavy belonging to the Abbot of Tavistock, from which the monks of Buckland claimed the right to take wood to repair the weir on the river. One day Thomas Gyreband, forester to the Abbot of Tavistock, treating the monks as trespassers, assaulted them so grievously that he drew blood. The Buckland monks returned the compliment, and sent an arrow into the forester's arm, whereupon he fled, leaving his coat, bow, and hatchet in the hands of the enemy. He then had the impudence to bring an action against these militant ecclesiastics, charging them with assaulting him with ‘darts and hatchets,’ and with stealing his coat. Innocence, however, triumphed, and the forester was sent to prison for making a false accusation.*

The orchards of Buckland are very ancient. Says Dr. Oliver, ‘the parish of Buckland was early celebrated for its cider, and some writers contend that orchards were first planted here in England. But the celebrated Norman antiquary, Monsieur de Gerville of Valognes,

* T. Brooking Rowe's ‘Buckland Abbey,’ *Trans. Dev. Assoc.*, vii.

has, we think, abundantly shown that the abbots of Montburg had already introduced apple-orchards into their manors of Lodres and Axmouth, and that cider as early as 1286 was the drink of their labourers.'

The present Buckland Abbey is a tall building partly covered with ivy. Over the entrance are the arms of Drake, while another doorway is surmounted by a mutilated head, supposed to be that of the foundress, the Countess Amicia. Several interesting relics of the great Sir Francis are shown to visitors, amongst others, his Bible, sword, and drums. There is also a *shield*, said to have once covered the body of this bold mariner, though I do not think that in the days of Gloriana either sailors or soldiers used such a protection. And amongst the portraits you will see one of Drake himself, as well as one of Don Pedro de Valdez, Vice-admiral of the Armada, whom he took prisoner and kept at Buckland till his friends paid a ransom. 'His portrait,' we shall agree with Mr. Rowe, 'shows him to have been every inch a Spanish cavalier—a noble figure with handsome features, presenting a strange contrast to the portrait of Drake, whose appearance is the direct opposite in every respect.' There are pictures also of Charles II., his Queen, Catherine of Braganza, and his mistress Nell Gwynne.

A shady lane descends to the river, passing an ancient cottage, known as Shepherd's Cot, with a good Perpendicular doorway and flat-headed windows. When we reach the river, we find a path passing through woodland and meadow—a charming walk. Hereabouts the tide meets the river, and Tavy, though no wider, becomes a staid, respectable stream, and is navigable for boats, and even for the passenger steamers that come up from Plymouth. As we approach Lophill—a cottage or two with a little grass-grown wharf—an abrupt hill is seen further down stream on the right bank. It is wooded to the top, and bends in a bold semicircular sweep towards the park

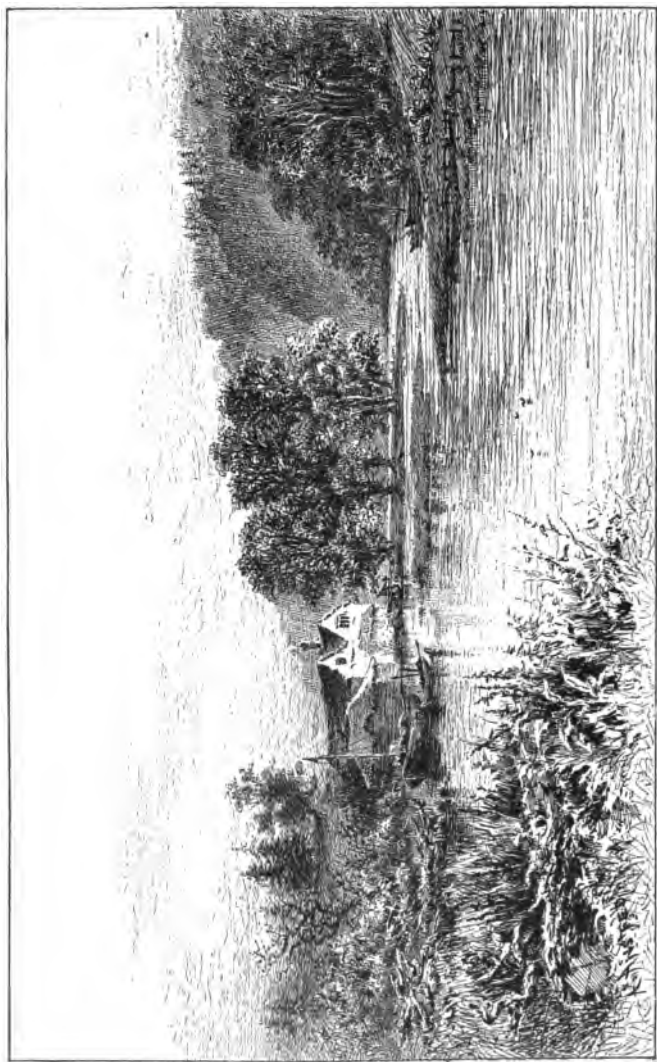
of Maristowe. The stream widens to about sixty yards, its current divided by a low grassy island, on either side of which lie two or three gaily-painted barges, their ochre-coloured sails furled along the boom. When I saw them, men were still engaged removing the stacks of timber piled along the shore, the result of the 'blizzard,' of which the marks will for a century be apparent in the devastated woods. 'I would rather,' said Sir Massey Lopes, owner of Maristowe, 'that the house had been destroyed. *That* I can rebuild, but my trees cannot be replaced for generations.'

While waiting for the steamer at Lophill let us take refreshment. There is a cottage at the entrance of the wood, where, for an extraordinarily low figure, an excellent tea can be had, either within or upon the tables placed beneath the trees. Here for a shilling you can have as much of

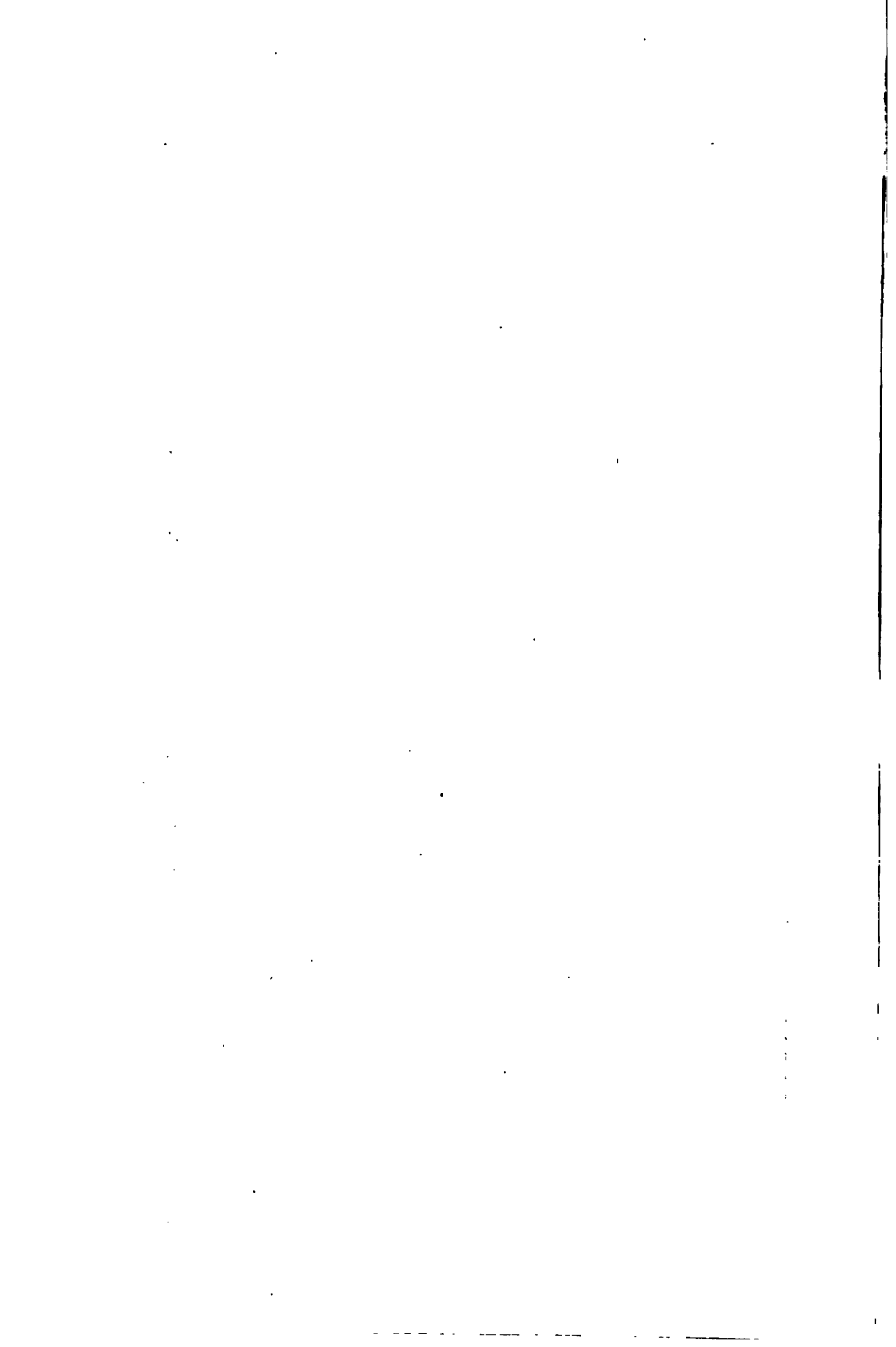
'Tea, that enlivener of wit and the soul,
More refreshing by far than the draughts of the bowl'

(as Washington Irving puts it), accompanied by a pile of bread-and-butter flanked by cake, jam, and clotted cream—'clouted' cream exists only in books—as would satisfy the hungriest school-boy. I drew the line at bread-and-butter and cake only, of which, for the modest sum of sixpence, I got a supply that I could not, with the best intentions, demolish. Happy, happy country where you can sit at your ease and enjoy the best of fare without having to pay for gilding, cotton-velvet seats, and the ever-hovering waiter!

Yes; living is cheap in these pleasant out-of-the-world spots, though even in places more populous the prices are not extravagant. I remember—and I think it was the very next day—enjoying a similar repast upon much the same terms. And this was at an inn well in the track of the tourist, and with a considerable village



THE TAVY AT LOPHILL. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED.



around, but happily far away from Plymouth and plate-glass. The name I do not give. Why should the worthy landlord on some future occasion charge eighteenpence instead of ninepence? Besides, it is so pleasant to be able to tell your friend, who for the same comestibles has paid as much again at the hotel a quarter of a mile further on, how economical you have been. Moreover,

‘ Cheapness is a blessed thing,
Beloved from pole to pole ;
To get a thing for one-and-four,
For which your friend pays twopence more,
Is balm unto the soul.’

So says *Mr. Punch*, that great observer and sound philosopher.

But a white puff of smoke rises against the trees, a shrill whistle awakes the echo of the woodland, and the Plymouth steamer alongside the wharf is preparing for the return journey. We cannot do better than explore the rest of the Tavy from her deck, for the roads are devious and the way is long.

The vessel has hardly reached full speed when Maristowe appears—a sloping lawn in front, trees at the back, the gray spire of the chapel peeping over the roof of the mansion. In a few minutes the river widens to half a mile, and over the bows is a long vista of blue water spanned, where the little river joins the great one,* by the bridge of the South-Western Railway. On the left rise woods; on the right, climbing a gentle slope from the very edge of the water, is the village of Beer Ferrers—popularly called Beer Ferris—with a very large and conspicuous church built by Sir William Ferrers in the thirteenth century. The older part is naturally of the Decorated period, but a good deal is Perpendicular, and by no means an improvement. The church is cruciform, with a tower at the west end. There is a fine canopied tomb over the effigies of the founder and his lady; and

* Tavy = *Tau vechau*, the little river; Tamar = *Tau mawr*, the great river.

in the north transept, under an arch, the figure of an unknown Crusader, and a fine altar-tomb, supposed to be the sepulchre of Sir Willoughby de Broke, who died in 1522.

A melancholy interest attaches to the east window, which contains representations of Sir William Ferrers and his wife, the former holding the model of a church in his hand, over which is inscribed *Wills Fereys me fecit*. These figures were being copied by Charles Stothard, F.S.A., when he fell from the ladder and was killed. His grave is in the churchyard immediately beneath the window.

A mile below Beer Ferrers, on the opposite shore, and almost hidden by the trees, is Warleigh, the scene of one of Mrs. Bray's romances. Tavy has maintained the character of its scenery to the very end, and, as the steamer leaves the railway bridge behind, its confluence with Tamar is marked by a wooded promontory, inside which lies Tamerton Creek, crossed by another railway bridge, and high on the hill above, overlooking the whole, the church of St. Budeaux.

CHAPTER XII

THE TAMAR TO WEIR HEAD.

The Voyage up the Tamar—Mount Edgcumbe—Maker—Devonport—The Hamoaze and the Navy—H.M.S. *Foudroyant* and the Fight off Carthage—Tor Point—The Lynher—Beggars' Island—Saltash—The Royal Albert Bridge—Landulph—St. Budeaux—The Fosseway—Hole's Hole—Pentillie Castle and the Story of John Tillie's Burial—Cothele—Buried alive—A Narrow Escape—Danescombe—Calstock—A Fruitful Land—Mines *versus* Vegetation—Harewood and the Legend of Ethelwold and Elfrida—Morwell Rocks—Weir Head.

WHERE is the mouth of the Tamar? The question is not easy to answer. Many would say Plymouth Sound, but this is *always* salt water—as much so, indeed, as Whitesand Bay on the other side of the Rame. The Hamoaze, too, is more sea than river, while even Saltash has something about its name more suggestive of the briny element than the fresh. A good many people consider the Tamar proper to end at the mouth of the Tavy, in which case the latter river can hardly be called a tributary. There is no doubt that the arm of the sea in which these rivers mingle their waters has a breadth as great as that of the two combined, and I am not aware that the tide ever leaves it. I suppose, therefore, that the lake-like expanse above Saltash may be taken as the place where Tamar yields himself to the sea.

I do not recommend anyone to follow the Tamar by land who can by hook or by crook—or rather by boat or by steamer—follow it by water. It is a delightful river

to row upon, though not without danger, because of the swell of the steamers in the narrow parts; it is still more delightful, because safer, to steam upon. But if the season or circumstance prevent your taking to the water, you cannot do better than get up to Beeralston, and thence make your way over Morwell Down to Morwell Rocks, the Weir Head, and New Bridge, when you will, at any rate, get a bird's-eye view of the best part of the river.

In that season of the year which we are pleased to call summer, the navigable waters of the Tamar are ploughed nearly every day by the paddle-wheels of the excursion steamer. No river in the West can be followed so far inland. From Plymouth to Weir Head, where it is barred to further ascent, there must be a waterway of twenty miles at least; and the scenery of the banks has gained for the Tamar a renown which not even the mines, ugly as they are, can destroy. It is more Rhine-like even than the 'English Rhine'—the Dart.

The steamer leaves the West Hoe Pier, and, passing Millbay and the Great Western Docks, skirts Devil's (*i.e.*, Duval's) Point over against Cremill beach, the landing-place for Mount Edgcumbe. This Mount Edgcumbe is a very beautiful domain, and no visitor to Plymouth should depart without seeing it at closer quarters than from the Hoe.* There is a ferry-boat continually running between Admiral's Hard, at Stonehouse, and the pretty little village of Cremill, and the passage is so short, and usually so still, that not even the most susceptible need tremble.

Mount Edgcumbe Park occupies a high peninsula. The greenness of its lawns, the luxuriance of its trees, coming in places almost to the water's edge, gives it an

* The grounds are open on Wednesdays; on other days by special order only, to be had at the Manor Office, Stonehouse.—Ward and Baddeley's 'South Devon and South Cornwall,' p. 139.

almost foreign look—more like the groves of an Italian shore than a hill washed by the cold seas of the North.

‘This mount all the mounts of England surpasses,’

wrote Garrick, putting into poetry very much what the Duke of Medina-Sidonia appears to have thought in prose. For, if history lie not, the Admiral of the Armada had fixed upon the estate of Mount Edgcumbe as his portion when the heretic Queen had been dethroned and England made a colony of Spain.

The seat of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, built by his ancestor, Sir Richard Edgcumbe, in 1550, I have never entered, nor is it shown to the public, but I learn that it has a fine hall. The exterior, though castellated, is not particularly imposing. The present square towers succeeded the original circular ones a little more than a hundred years ago. The English, French, and Italian gardens are celebrated not only for themselves, but for the lovely views they command of the Sound.

The walk through the grounds up to Maker Church, 400 feet above the sea, although necessarily an uphill one, will well repay the exertion. For Maker Church stands on a ridge, and from Maker Heights you get the finest panorama anywhere round Plymouth. The tower of this church once served for secular purposes; it was used as a signal station. To it attaches a tragic interest, for within it in 1763 a labourer named Maunder murdered the signalman, poor John Couch, for the sake of his watch and shoe-buckles. For awhile Maunder managed to elude detection, but retribution eventually overtook him, and he paid the penalty of his crime at Bodmin.

We may return from Mount Edgcumbe either by ferry or by boat, but the latter will be no longer plied by the ‘nautical females,’ who so excited the admiration of old Clarke. So skilful were they that he suggested that his Majesty’s navy might on emergencies be supplied with

these 'aquatic Amazons.' 'Our seamen,' he says, 'when engaged by the side of their favourite Susans, might exert themselves with additional vigour both from the fear of being excelled by women, and haply for the preservation of those they love. At any rate, it appears that many a female who plies a bench of oars at Plymouth would adorn our navy full as much as the ranks of our army are disgraced by a number of effeminate figures in scarlet whom one sees daily bepowdered and perfumed, armed cap-a-pee for the parades.' These be strong words, my masters.

Devil's Point is the southern extremity of Stonehouse, the town which almost connects Plymouth with Devonport. Two of the 'three towns,' as the inhabitants delight to call them, are separated from the third by Stonehouse Pool, up which are the naval and military hospitals. This creek is spanned by Stonehouse Bridge, over which passes the road to Devonport. Leaving behind Devil's Point and the great Royal William victualing yard, perhaps the finest naval establishment of its kind in the country, the steamer passes beneath Mount Wise—the Hoe of Devonport—and thence past the dockyard, to which that town owes its existence. For Devonport is quite a modern place, with a still more modern name. It was not until late in the seventeenth century that William III. commenced the little dockyard of five acres, which has since increased to over seventy. And around it rose the town of Plymouth Dock, which in 1824 became Devonport, though the old name stuck to the dockyard until 1843, when her Majesty marked her visit by commanding that it should take the name of the town.

Beyond the dockyard there is not a great deal to be seen at Devonport. Much of the town lies behind Mount Wise, and rises gently towards the pleasant suburb of Stoke, which is divided from the town by the Park, a

grassy track commanding views over Plymouth to the Sound and breakwater, and over Morice Town to the Hamoaze, with its lines of naval monsters.

And now we enter this Hamoaze, where lie not only ships 'in ordinary,' but divers hulks that will never go to sea more. There was a time when the shipping on the broad expanse was picturesque. That time has for ever departed. The old line-of-battle ships, some of them thick with warlike memories, have nearly all gone, and in their stead is as ugly a fleet of monstrosities as eye can rest upon. The English navy of the nineteenth century may be superior in strength to that of the eighteenth, but in beauty it cannot compare with the old ships of Nelson's days. We still prate of our wooden walls, but where are they? Our walls now are of material very different, and the venerable song,

'Hearts of oak are our ships,'

should now commence

'Walls of iron.'

Still,

'Jolly tars are our men,'

and I make no doubt that if these floating forts in the Hamoaze were ever engaged in actual warfare, the English sailor of to-day would give as good an account of himself as any of his forebears.

They are hideous, these ironclads, with their gaunt masts, single yards, and general paucity of rigging. Occasionally a great lumping brute of five or six thousand tons has but one mast—merely for signalling purposes—to relieve the heavy monotony of her black length. Then there are the torpedo-boats, spiteful little craft, like gigantic cigars rushing hither and thither at a speed almost equal to that of a railway train. I pity the officer commanding one of these abominations almost as much as he pities himself. In a heavy sea it is, I am told,

almost a foregone conclusion that he succumbs to *mal-de-mer*, while the poor wretches battened down in the cabin and continuously under water endure an atmosphere simply suffocating.

Passing up the Hamoaze one cannot fail to gather an idea, better than that conveyed by any blue-book, of the enormous expense of our navy. Here are ships, many practically new, and that have cost half a million or more apiece, declared obsolete after a few voyages, and towed to their last resting-place, while the hammers at Devonport and Keyham are yet ringing on another monster still more ungainly, which has a few more inches of armour, a novel turret, or engines that will drive her through the water (or under it) at two or three knots extra per hour. There is one big ship, I am told, that has never got beyond Plymouth Breakwater; there are others which, for defects of one sort or another, are condemned soon after they leave the stocks. Of course all this cannot be avoided; we must be as able to deal death as our neighbours; experience must be bought, but experience is dreadfully expensive.

One line of gunboats—there are, I think, about half a dozen of them, and they have a strong family likeness—is facetiously dubbed ‘Rotten Row.’ Rusting Row would be a more appropriate nickname, did not the Admiralty by a judicious expenditure of paint keep them in decent appearance.

There are, however, a few wooden walls left, though they may be counted on the fingers of one hand. There is the *Cambridge*, now a gunnery training-ship, near Tor Point; the *Indus* and the *Vengeance*, off Keyham Dockyard; and one or two more. But the most interesting vessels in the Hamoaze are the *Foudroyant* and *Implacable*, English ships by right of conquest only. The former was taken in the action off Carthagera in 1758. Captain Gardiner, of the *Monmouth*, the ship engaging the *Fou-*

droyant, was severely wounded during the action. He sent for his first lieutenant, the next in command, and begged him never to strike. The lieutenant—his name deserves to be known; it was Carket—went on deck, and nailed the ensign to the staff. And the *Foudroyant* struck. She is now a school for gunners.* The *Implacable* was captured in the year of Trafalgar, and now serves as a training-ship for boys.

After we have passed Keyham Dockyard, with its immense roofs and the gray village of Tor Point stretching up the slope of the Cornish shore opposite, the Hamoaze widens. Above Tor Point is Thanckes, formerly the seat of Lord Graves, now a military college; beyond it, against the sky, the spire of Merrifield Church; below, the hamlet of Wilcove at the head of a little creek. This Cornish side is of gently-sloping hills prettily wooded, especially about Anthony House, where the trees come nearly to the water—in fact, would dip their branches therein were it not for the low cliffs, or rather banks, of limestone.

On rounding Bull Point, a spit of land on the eastern shore marked by a powder-factory, the first full view is obtained of the Royal Albert Bridge, the *magnum opus* of Isambard Brunel. Opposite Bull Point is the Lynher, the estuary of a river that rises miles away in the very bowels of Cornwall. As it is not a Devonshire river, I cannot here say much about it; but it has a most lovely estuary, navigable for a considerable distance—even to St. Germans, where is a fine old church, till the eleventh century the cathedral of Cornwall. Then there is Trematon Castle, a thirteenth-century ruin, standing boldly on the northern shore over against Anthony Woods. At the mouth of the Lynher—or, as it is more generally called, the St. Germans River—is a low-lying islet marked by a wall, and known as Beggars' Island.

* About the time this was written, the *Foudroyant*—I presume it is the same ship—was sold to a German firm for firewood! It was only after continuous protests that she was repurchased.

According to Carew, author of the 'Survey of Cornwall,' who was born at Anthony House in 1555, and lies buried in Anthony Churchyard, the islet acquired its name from the following circumstance: His great-grandfather, rowing down from Saltash, espied two rascals fighting on the beach. He shipped them over to the islet, and there left them to fight it out—'to try,' writes his descendant, '(as in a lists) the uttermost of their quarrell; which place they did not quit until the low water enfranchised them by wading, and the respite vent out the alyefume of their fury.' At a later date it is said to have been the occasional resort of another and more celebrated scamp—that Bampfylde Moore Carew to whose history as King of the Beggars I have already made some reference.

There is something rather quaint about the town of Saltash. Like Dartmouth, it climbs the side of a steep hill, the houses overtopping each other stairway fashion. But it is not as interesting as the town on the Dart, and has, indeed, but one curiosity—the tower of the church of SS. Nicholas and Faith, supposed to be of Saxon workmanship. Nor, though an ancient town, has it left its mark so plainly on the pages of English history. Yet its annals are worth studying. Edward VI. made it a Parliamentary borough, and its shipping was of some fame in the days of his half-sister Elizabeth. Looking at its present size, not to speak of its position, one almost laughs to read that in days of yore it levied dues on all vessels entering Plymouth Sound, while the Mayor of 'Sutton' had on all public occasions to play second-fiddle to his Worship of 'Asche.' A ferry-boat, now worked by steam,* has crossed the Tamar since the days of Edward III., and the ferry itself was granted by the Black Prince to a faithful follower who had lost an eye in

* 'Residents of Saltash have privilege (by charter) of free passage across as often as they please—forty days will confer the right to new occupiers.'—Wood's 'Trip up the Tamar.'

battle. The little town, too, has not been without its share of war's alarms. It was a continual bone of contention during the Civil War: at one time held by Royalist, at another by Roundhead, until the greatest Roundhead of all—old Noll—took it and *kept* it. In the days when it had Parliamentary honours, it was represented by two men of widely different character, but each not unknown to fame in his own day (or even now)—Lord Clarendon, who wrote the 'History of the Rebellion,' and Waller, who wrote sentimental poetry.

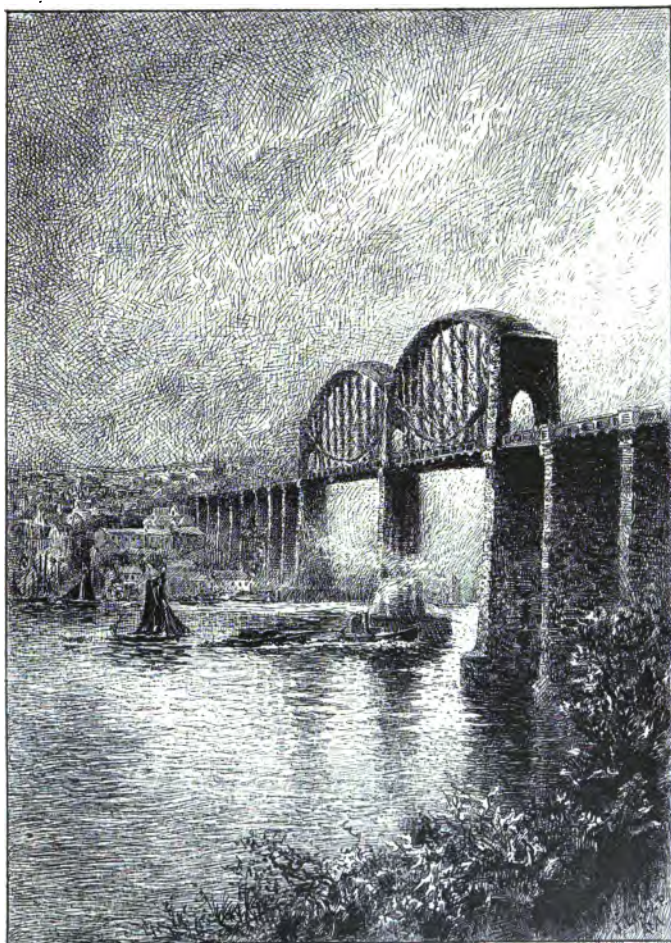
The approach to the town is beneath steep slopes, greenest of the green. Two of them, separated by a tiny creek, are united by one of those graceful wooden viaducts so picturesque a feature in the West Country railways. Contrasted with this frail-looking structure, the great bridge rising overhead looks massive indeed. It is 240 feet high from the foundations to the top of the tubes resting on the three central piers, which are far apart, and carry the railway at an elevation lofty enough to allow the tallest ship to pass beneath. The length of the structure is 2,240 feet, with nineteen openings, of which the greater number are on the land, nine of them taking the line over the roofs of Saltash. Brunel is said to have regarded this great engineering feat as his *chef d'œuvre*, and perhaps it was; but there are many who think that the erection of such a bridge and in such a position was like his building the sea-wall from Dawlish to Teignmouth—a colossal piece of extravagance. But none could control Brunel when his mind was set on a project, and the railway company not only paid the piper, but let him choose the tune.

Almost under the bridge, and well setting off its fine proportions, is H.M.S. *Mount Edgcumbe*, a floating industrial school. She is a pretty ship, though, or perhaps I should say *because*, of an obsolete type, and comes well into the foreground of the wide expanse into which the

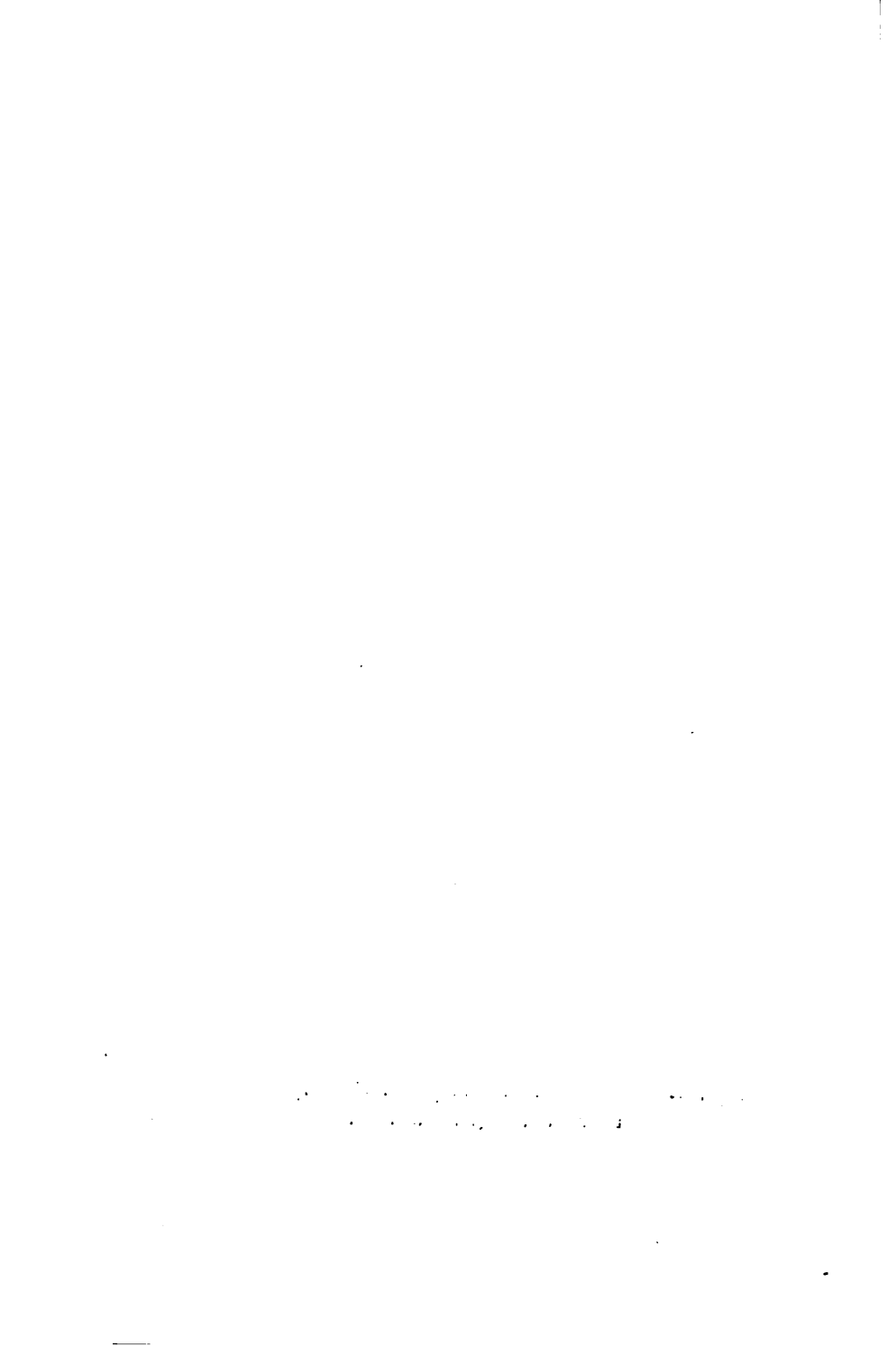
estuary spreads immediately above Saltash—at its widest point a mile across. On a headland up this lake (for lake to all appearance it is), at the mouth of the creek of Botus Fleming, is Landulph Church, where lie the bones of Theodore Paleologus, the last descendant of the Greek Emperors of Constantinople, who died in 1636 while on a visit to the neighbourhood. Nearer, on the Devon shore, is the church of St. Budeaux, built in the reign of Elizabeth by Robert Budockshed in lieu of an older church that stood near the shore. This church—the new one—was roughly used in the ‘war time,’ being garrisoned by a Royalist officer, Major Stucley. But the Roundheads, as at Saltash, had their will, and the gallant Major and his force of over a hundred men were taken prisoners. A monument to this officer, who thus turned a church into a fort, may be seen within its walls, as also the celebrated monument to the Gorges family. But the distance from the river is considerable.

At Tamerton the old Fosseway is said to have ended at a ferry where the river was crossed and the road continued through Cornwall. Part of it, near Plympton, is still called the Ridgeroad, and many events has it seen. ‘Roman spears and helmets have glittered there in the sun. Fierce Saxons and fiercer Danes, the destrier of the Norman knight and the Benedictine abbot’s ambling mule, alike have passed along it. There rode the captive King of France with the Black Prince at his side, when, after Poitiers, he landed at Plymouth, and proceeded thence to London, feasted by all the great towns in his way. There the Princess Catherine of Arragon looked for the first time on English fields and orchards, as she passed onward to meet her chequered destiny. . . . The spurs of Fairfax and his bands, the plumes of Hopton and his cavaliers, alike have jingled and fluttered there. What hopes and what fears, what changes and chances, has not that forgotten road-line witnessed !’*

* R. J. King’s ‘Dartmoor Forest and its Borders.’



THE ROYAL ALBERT BRIDGE AT SALTASH. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED,
FROM A SKETCH BY J. LL. W. PAGE.



Passing the mouth of Tamerton Creek, of recent years bridged by the South-Western Railway, we reach the confluence of Tamar and Tavy, and have the finest view on these the upper waters of the estuary. There are Warleigh Woods, looking down upon the Tavy, with the white walls of Maristowe gleaming against more foliage beyond, and, bounding the horizon in the extreme distance, the blue tors of Dartmoor, chiefest being Great Mis Tor, a true mountain. The view up the larger stream is almost equally fine—not quite, for the round masses of Kit Hill and Hingston Down* lack the boldness of the tors.

But presently a great part of this vanishes, as, passing Landulph, the steamer glides by Cargreen Hamlet, whose picturesqueness is spoilt by some tall chimneys (an earnest of what is to follow) standing at the very edge of the water. Over a green promontory beyond, but a long way off by the river, is seen the mining village of Gunnislake and the chimneys of sundry copper-mines, their ugliness softened by distance. Further up on the right hand, Hole's Hole is reached, two or three houses on a slope. Hereabouts are the first indications of the lofty wooded hills which make the winding Tamar so beautiful. From this point, indeed, the really romantic part of the river begins.

And now we see how true are those lines which declare that

‘The surging snake
Has not more folds than Tamar.’

For above Hole's Hole the river makes such a bend that it almost returns upon itself. The peninsula thus created is not more than a third of a mile at its base, but the river makes a good two miles of it in getting round. Just

* *Hengistdune*, where it is said that Hengist the Saxon won a victory over the Cornu-Britons, and where, nearly 400 years later, Egbert beat both Briton and Dane.

where it bends to the left again is Pentillie Castle, where the Corytons dwell, placed in delightful grounds high up on the wooded slopes. The mansion looks well from the river, but is too modern to have much interest.

There is a strange story about Pentillie. The former mansion was erected by one John Tillie, formerly a groom to Sir John Coryton, and afterwards his steward, who ultimately gained possession of the estate, and was knighted by James II. He is said to have died an atheist, and the story goes that he directed his executors to place his body fully dressed in a chair within a tower on the estate, and to arrange upon a table in front of it tobacco, pipes, and liquor. He did not, he said, believe in the Resurrection, and within two years would return to Pentillie.* Some say that the executors carried out his instructions; but a later writer scouts the whole story. Mr. Gilbert in his 'History of Cornwall,' while admitting that the quondam groom was buried in a *vault* of the tower, absolutely denies the rest of the story (including the charge of atheism), and the legend is traced to Sir James's monument, where he appears *seated in his favourite chair*! The estate fell again into the hands of the Corytons by the marriage of the grand-daughter of his nephew and heir, James Woolley, with John Coryton.

Presently we get to Halton Quay, where a barge or two lies reflected in the placid stream, now narrowing rapidly, though still an estuary. Here for awhile the trees cease, but soon recommence more dense than ever—the steep woods of Cothele.† The house of Cothele you cannot see at all from the water; but you should not fail to visit it, for it is a fine example of the old fortified dwelling of 400 years ago. And the entrance gateway and south front are of earlier date even than this. On the north of the

* Gilpin's 'Observations on the Western Counties.'

† *Coed hel* is Celtic for the steep wood.

quadrangle is a fine hall with timbered roof, the walls covered with ancient weapons and armour. In fact, the whole mansion is full of relics of a bygone day; tapestry, silver, china, cabinets, chairs and tables of shape and pattern sufficient to cause the mouth of antiquary and *dealer* to water. For six centuries and more have the Edgcumbes held it; and here have they entertained royalty more than once or twice. Charles I., his scapegrace son—afterwards the Merry Monarch—George III. and Queen Charlotte, and, lastly, her present Majesty and the Prince Consort, have each and all enjoyed its hospitality.

Nor is Cothele without its legends; it would be strange if it were. The first Lord Edgcumbe was within an ace of not becoming 'his lordship' at all. And this is how it happened: His mother was taken ill and (according to the doctors) died. She was buried, and nothing more would have been heard of her, had not the sexton, thinking it a pity that her jewels should be below instead of above ground, invaded the vault on felonious thoughts intent. In trying to draw a ring from the finger of the corpse, he used some force, with the result that the body stirred. This, as may be imagined, was enough for the rascal, who fled into the upper air leaving the door ajar. Rising from her charnel-house, Lady Edgcumbe picked up the sexton's lantern and returned to her family, on whom this resurrection must have had an effect almost as startling as it was agreeable. It was not till five years later that she gave birth to Richard, whom King George II. created Baron Edgcumbe of Mount Edgcumbe.

Long before this another Richard Edgcumbe, suspected of being a partisan of the Earl of Richmond, concealed himself in the woods from the minions of 'Crookback.' But so close was the search that he was nearly caught, and only escaped by throwing his cap in the river, which, the pursuers catching sight of, supposed that he had

drowned himself rather than fall into their hands. Accordingly, they gave up the chase, and the fugitive escaped to Brittany, returning only to fight at Bosworth Field, where he was knighted by Henry, and afterwards had the satisfaction of hunting down the chief of his former persecutors, Sir Henry Trenowth, whose estates were confiscated and given to the man whom he had so 'narrowly searched for'—and so nearly caught. Half hidden by the foliage, there stands on a rocky bank just beyond Cothele Quay the chapel which Sir Richard built in gratitude for his deliverance, and upon a tablet therein you may read Carew's account of how he escaped.

It is an interesting little building with stained glass in the windows, and a replica of Sir Richard's monument in Morlaix Church, where he is represented kneeling to his patron saint St. Thomas à Becket, the words 'Ste. Tho. ora pro me Richdo.' issuing on a label from the knight's mouth.

A combe above this chapel bears the name that carries one back to the days when the Neustrian churches rang with the prayer, 'A furore Normannorum libera nos Domine.' It is, indeed, said to be the spot where the Danes landed in 977, and whence they marched to the battle on Hingstone Down far above. And so the valley to this day is called *Danescombe*.

Another great bend, and the steamer draws nigh to Calstock, and to something more interesting to the average tourist (for Calstock is not an interesting place), the famous strawberry-gardens. There they are on the hillside full of luscious fruit. And you can enter this paradise and have as much as you like for a shilling; at least, such was the case twenty years ago, and I do not know that the arrangement has been altered. And if it be true that these and the gardens in the neighbouring parishes have sent as much as eighty tons to London from a single railway-station in a single season, the proprietors can

well afford to turn the visitor loose among the beds. But I am afraid that the shilling does not include the cream, without which, especially to a Western man, the strawberry is even as beef without mustard.

This is, indeed, the land of fruit. Gooseberries are equally plentiful, and as for cherries, they are as was silver in the days of Solomon, 'nothing accounted of.' If you care to walk across the peninsula between Tamar and Tavy, you will see more trees within a square mile or two than in half of another county. Near Beer Ferrers in particular there is a large tree which in a good season has yielded as much as a thousand pounds' weight.

No railway, save the East Cornwall Minerals, has as yet visited Calstock; neither is there any passenger station this side of the Tamar for seven or eight miles, and although that of Beer Alston, up over the Devon shore, is nearer, you must be ferried across to reach it, for bridge there is none. Consequently, the river is the natural highway to Calstock, for even on the Cornish side the village can only be got at by way of a long and terribly steep hill. As for the houses, they are stuck along the declivity one almost on the top of another, the ground-floor windows of one house looking upon the roof of the one immediately below. The church on the hill-top, a long mile from Calstock Quay, is yet close to the river, though a boat starting from the quay will have to travel some *four* miles before it reaches it. This looks like an arithmetical problem, does it not? But a glance at the map will make the matter plain. The fact is, the Tamar here makes a tremendous curve, and the traveller who looks up at Calstock Church as he approaches the village may well feel astonished when, having long lost sight of it, and, as he imagines, left it behind, he finds himself nearer than before.

There is nothing of special interest about this church, but, as the steamer calls at Calstock, it may be worth while

to climb the hill, if only for the far-reaching view over the Tamar Valley, and the bare-looking mining district of Gunnislake. It is of the usual granite, and in style Perpendicular. The tower, when compared with those of other churches in these parts, strikes one as peculiar. This is owing to the removal or non-completion of the upper half of the pinnacles; but this defect is, I believe, to be shortly remedied. There is an uncommonly heavy flag of granite lying across the threshold under the porch bearing in massive *raised* letters the laconic inscription, 'Griffin Steven 1591 May 8 John 1625 27. F.' Evidently the person who placed this stone here was a believer in the spirit (for he cannot have seen the words) of a more modern monument:

'Praises on tombs are trifles vainly spent,
A man's own worth is his own monument.'

Hardly do we leave Calstock Quay, when those abominations, the mines, begin to disfigure the riverside. There is one on the right hand just within the skirts of a wood that used to clothe the hillside with foliage to the very edge of the water. But such is no longer the case. For a wide area the branches are blasted, and black as those of the trees of a London square in January. Not knowing much of the ways of mines, I asked a fellow-traveller the meaning of this melancholy sight. 'Arsenic,' he replied briefly. And so it was, and, alas! still is—the smoke from the furnaces where mundic is being converted into this destructive though valuable commodity withering every bit of vegetation it touches.

More winding, and Harewood House comes into view on a wooded promontory running out from the Cornish shore. It is not worth while to discuss here whether these woods were the scene of the murder of Ethelwold, first husband of wicked Elfrida, but, as the story is connected with the neighbourhood, it may interest the tourist up the Tamar. Elfrida, daughter of Ealdorman Ordgar,

was of such surpassing beauty that a rumour thereof had even reached the ears of Edgar the King. This monarch, who, in his domestic relations, appears to have been one of the most faithless of men, despatched his favourite Ethelwold to view the lady and report on her charms. No sooner had that nobleman cast eyes on the beauty than he fell in love with her himself, and concluding, perhaps, that all was fair in love and war, informed his master that she was in nowise fascinating, but, if anything, rather commonplace. Nevertheless, he added that she was possessed of a goodly fortune, and with his lord's permission he would propose for her himself. Edgar consented, and Elfrida became the wife of Ethelwold.

But either Elfrida's beauty was too brilliant to be long concealed, or some mischief-maker told the King how he had been deceived. At any rate, Edgar found that he had been duped, and cast about for a means to effect his revenge. But why not, as a first step, go down to the West and see the lady himself? So Ethelwold was informed that the King would honour him with a visit. Home posted the terrified Ethelwold, and, confessing his deception, implored his bride to use every art to conceal her beauty. But did there ever yet live the belle who would deliberately make herself a dowdy? And Elfrida's wrath at losing a crown was intense. However, she promised compliance, shut herself up with her tiring maidens, and—prepared for action. And when Edgar arrived, a lovely and magnificently dressed hostess sailed forth to meet him, and Ethelwold was undone. Yet still the King dissembled, but not for long. Next day there was a hunt in Harewood Forest, to which, of course, Ethelwold accompanied his royal guest. From that hunt he never returned, for the King slew him with his own hand, grimly asking the natural son of the murdered man, 'what he thought of *that* sort of game.' And so Elfrida became Queen of England.

The subsequent history of this infamous woman is well known. How she caused an assassin to stab her stepson, King Edward, while drinking from the stirrup-cup she had herself placed in his hand, in order that she might place her own child Ethelred on the throne; how she was haunted by fiends and the pale form of the murdered youth; how she founded monasteries in expiation of her crimes; and how, in spite of prayers, penances, and a robe covered with crosses, she died in terror and despair 'unwept, unhonoured, and unsung'—these things are all told in the records of that far-off time more than nine centuries ago.

And now begins the most beautiful part of the river. On the Cornish side the steep hills are densely wooded; on the Devon shore coppice and brushwood cover slopes even more precipitous. At a bend in the river, a mile beyond New Quay and Morwellham, the Tamar sweeps beneath great piles of rock rising from the margin to a height of over 300 feet, not in unbroken precipice, but in rugged irregular crags, their scars filled with ivy and trailing plants. These are the famous Morwell Rocks, and if you land at Morwellham, and get on to the summit, you will see a panorama which has no rival in the West of England, not even in the river gorge below Clifton Down. Up and down the stream may be traced the windings of the deep but narrow river, at high-tide flowing between lofty hills sometimes fringed by a narrow strip of green meadow. Across the water there is Calstock Church again, and straggling Gunnislake, and there are Hingston Down and Kit Hill, and, alas! there, too, are the ugly mine stacks. And not far from the rocks is the interesting old homestead of Morwell Farm. It was once of higher estate, and belonged to the powerful abbey of Tavistock. The fifteenth-century gateway is yet standing.

The steamer draws near her journey's end, though the

paddles still strike with undiminished rapidity the narrowing waters. The Tamar is now but fifty or sixty feet across, and branches frequently sweep the port sponson as the vessel hugs the Cornish shore. Presently, as a rocky hill, a confused mass of gray stone and green coppice, comes into sight, the bell rings, the engines cease to throb, and the boat stops. We have reached the pool beneath Weir Head, and our voyage is over. For, just above, the river is crossed by a weir, and although there is a lock communicating with the non-tidal waters beyond, nothing but barges pass through. Slowly the steamer swings round; presently the bows again point downstream. She is off on her homeward journey, turns the corner, disappears; and we are left standing by the lock-gates watching the white puff of steam as it rises against the dark woods, growing fainter and fainter as the crags of Morwell, against which the vapour breaks, absorb it into their own hue.

CHAPTER XIII

FROM WEIR HEAD TO WOOLEY MOOR.

New Bridge—The Devon Great Consols—The Leat—Hingston Down—Horse Bridge—Endsleigh—Dunterton—Cartha Martha—Ancient Earthworks—Graystone Bridge—The Lid—Sydenham—Lidford Cascade—Lidford Castle—Judge Jeffreys and the Mayor of Arundel—Lidford Gorge—Poulston Bridge—Launceston—The Church and Castle—The Bude Canal—Boyton—Tamerton—Bridgerule—The Reservoir—The Source of Tamar and Torridge.

BETWEEN Weir Head and the point where the Tamar is spanned by its first bridge—that is, its first *road* bridge—the scenery is still of an interesting description, though Gunnislake, stretching along the Cornish slope, is anything but attractive. From the weir it is best to get ferried across to the Devon shore, and continue on foot through the woods to New Bridge. Here the road from Tavistock into Cornwall crosses the Tamar, and, in spite of the mines, the spot is not destitute of beauty. The valley is deep, the road dropping to the river on both sides at a very steep gradient. On the Cornish shore, indeed, it was found advisable to slope the road right on to the bridge itself, with the result that on that side the structure is higher than on the Devonshire bank of the stream. The six arches are lofty, and look narrower than do those of other bridges we have seen hitherto, though this is possibly an illusion caused by their additional height above the water. One cannot look at the narrow roadway without thinking how few men

it would take to hold this key of Cornwall against an army.

'In yon strait path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.'

And fighting there of course has been here, not for the first time, I expect, during the war between King and Parliament, when the Earl of Essex tried to force it on his march Westward.

It is a pretty bridge, too, built of clean gray stone, and mantled in part with ivy. Beneath it the river flows in a deep slow current, winding down from a wooded valley, disfigured on the eastern slopes by the minestack, wheels, and refuse-heaps of part of the Devon Great Consols Mine. The greater part of the workings are, however, mercifully hidden beyond the eastern slopes.

With a farewell glance down stream at the tower of Calstock Church, still visible on its promontory, we turn our faces northward, and, entering upon the river-side road at a cottage almost on the bridge itself, pass onwards towards the mines. For the first half-mile the way is pleasant enough, the road winding along the river's bank beneath the shade of oaks that the poisonous fumes of arsenic and sulphur have not yet reached. Here, where a low cliff rises, overhung with foliage, the first 'stickle' greets us, and the Tamar is divided by a wooded island. So still is the spot, so forest-like the surroundings, that man and his works might be a hundred miles away, instead of little more than a hundred yards.

In the cliff are two caves, or rather fissures, the larger apparently connected with the mines, as the remains of a little wooden conduit lie along the bottom, down which runs a stream. How far these caves penetrate I do not know, nor should I advise anyone to try and ascertain, some experience of underground passages having taught me that such places are best left alone.

In a few minutes we are among the lower workings of the mine, pumps and wheels and aqueducts and the other necessities of a large undertaking. Nor, however destructive to Nature's beauties, can we pass through the Devon Great Consols without a thought on their strange eventful history. Probably no mine—or rather group of mines—has ever reached such a pitch of prosperity since mining began.

The geological formation of the district is clay-slate, to which the Tamar is here a natural boundary, the hills on the Cornish side of the stream being of granite. The sett has an area of four miles by two and a half, and has been worked to a depth of between fourteen and fifteen hundred feet. Without wearying the reader with statistics, it may be mentioned that there are some thirty miles of levels under ground, nine miles of shafts and winzes, and a mile of flues for the arsenic works. The mine is worked both by steam and water, and in its palmy days seven engines and thirty-two immense water-wheels supplemented human labour.

It is not till 1844 that the history of the Devon Great Consols really commences. It is true that prior to that date an attempt had been made, but the enterprise was abandoned, and Tavistock people looking shyly upon the undertaking, a company was formed by some London gentlemen, to whom the Duke of Bedford granted a lease for twenty-one years. A thousand and twenty-four one-pound shares were allotted, upon which I believe five shillings only was at first paid. A rich vein was soon struck; the shares rose in value, until at one time they fetched £600 each, which, even allowing them to have been fully paid, represented the phenomenal sum of £5,400 per cent. to the lucky shareholder! Indeed, the figures in connection with this extraordinary mine almost make one giddy. In twenty-one years the mines produced ore and arsenic to the value of more than £2,500,000,

and the dues paid to the Duke of Bedford in the first seven years alone amounted to £40,000, while the shareholders within the same period received £180,000 in dividends. But luck changed, and the return to-day is small indeed. Very little copper is 'brought to grass'; arsenic is the chief product, though scarcely in such quantities as heretofore, when there was prepared 160 tons per month—'half the production of the whole world.' I am told that this deadly powder has to be carefully guarded against by those engaged in its preparation, and that the workmen keep a handkerchief continually over the mouth to prevent injury from the dust and fumes. As the inhalation of a tenth part of a teaspoonful means certain death, they do well to be careful.

And now let us get down to the leat that drives some of the big wheels of the mine. This leat is about a mile and a half in length, and the amount of water which it takes from the Tamar (though in the end restoring it) causes the bed of that river between the weir at the head and the mine to present in dry weather very much the appearance of one of its brethren on Dartmoor. The change from the still waters surrounding the island to the gray boulders bleaching in the sun half a mile higher is remarkable.

The valley narrows rapidly, so rapidly, indeed, that there is little more than room for leat and river to run side by side. And once more we are unconscious of mines and miners. Through the thick foliage we may occasionally catch a glimpse across the river—where the hillside is even steeper, and trees are mingled with rock—of a mine-stack or refuse-heap, but they are practically hidden, and the walk along this leat is one full of charm. Indeed, so secluded and sylvan is this artificial river, that it needs no great stretch of the imagination to fancy one's self strolling by some stream in private grounds. Up above the woods may be—and are—blasted by the sulphur

and arsenic: down here they are green and abundant, and neither smoke offends the nostril nor clank of machinery the ear.

Over the water zigzag and circle insects of many kinds, the prettiest being a very elegant dragon-fly with wings of a deep steel-blue. But unfortunately the gad-fly is present, too, and his attentions, though doubtless flattering, are the reverse of agreeable.

Soon we reach the weir. A little above it is the wooden suspension bridge, over which passes the path to Latchley. The hills are lower now, and the valley opens out. At the bend of the long reach made by the weir, a mine-stack and pumping-house—fortunately the last—cast their unpleasing reflections upon the waters. It is worth while ascending the hill to this mine, for it commands a fine view. There, high up over the pastures on the Cornish shore, swell the moorlands of Hingston Down and Kit Hill, with the hamlet of Latchley half hid in a green combe in the foreground. Of course there are regiments of mine-stacks, but the view is too wide and open to be much affected thereby, and several have ceased to smoke these many years.

This Hingston Down is, say the wise, the Hengistdune of the Saxon Chronicle, where Egbert the Bretwalda routed a great host of Danes and Cornish more than a thousand years ago. This may be, but they can have little or no reason for tracing its name to *Hengist*,* and still less for saddling the name of Horse Bridge upon his half-brother Horsa. I am chary of advancing any theory on this thorny subject, but with regard to the latter name would, 'with submission,' as the lawyers say—when, by the way, they feel anything but submissive—suggest that stone bridges succeeded wooden ones, and were built for

* The name is more likely to be a corruption of Hangstone Down (or its Saxon equivalent). It is likely enough that a dolmen or 'hanging stone' once stood there, or perhaps a projecting natural rock, as on Hangingstone Hill, Dartmoor.

the passage of *horses* as traffic became more extensive. Or possibly that, as there is, and perhaps always was, a footbridge to Latchley, the bridge above that hamlet may have earned its name in contradistinction.

Horse Bridge is very much upon the same lines as New Bridge, but it spans a far clearer though, of course, much shallower stream, and there are trees and meadows instead of ugly cottages and mine buildings. It lies at a spot where the valley is open, the last place, indeed, for some distance, for presently we get into wooded gorges, through which the Tamar twists for miles. A little hamlet on the left bank is the only settlement approaching a village for some distance, and the man who means to follow the river closely will do well to bait at the inn hard by ere resuming his travels.

Near Horse Bridge is the finest estate on the Tamar—the romantic domain of Endsleigh. Endsleigh, the property of the Duke of Bedford, is not open to all comers bent on tracing the Tamar upwards.* But to the favoured few who can obtain permission to follow the riverside path through Bridge Farm on the Cornish shore, there are scenes of sylvan loveliness second to none in Devonshire.. After traversing a few meadows, the traveller plunges into thick woods, which come right down to the river's edge. Along the margin is a green glade, and between it and the stream, here flowing placidly enough over flat reefs of slate, the foliage is not so thick but that other wooded hills are visible on the Devon bank. And for some three miles or more this paradise continues.

On the side of a steeply-sloping park, across the river, stands the house called *Endsleigh Cottage*, but in reality a good-sized country house, of the rustic order of archi-

* I here take the opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to the Duke of Bedford for permission to ramble through this delightful scenery, and would also thank his agent for guidance and assistance.

ture—gables, ornamental chimneys, and a profusion of creepers; in short, all that goes to make a picturesque dwelling. But it is not the house which brings so many visits to Endsleigh; it is the dells, the dingles, the beautifully-laid-out gardens, the grottos, châteaux, and what not, which it has been the delight of former noble owners to plan, not only for their own delight, but for that of others. For the grounds immediately adjacent are thrown open to duly accredited parties, and I fancy, indeed know, that the estate office at Tavistock is at times pretty well besieged for cards of admission. Endsleigh is, in fact, the happy hunting-ground of the picnicker for all the neighbourhood round—from Launceston, from Lifton, from Tavistock, and exacting indeed must be the individual who cannot enjoy a very satisfactory *dolce far niente* in this retreat so 'far from the madding crowd.'

But pleasant as are these woods, they are rather airless for pedestrian exercise on a warm day in summer. And just beyond Endsleigh they get more dense than ever, while the hills tower up a very wall of leafage confining the river to a narrow gorge. And here, as if annoyed at being thwarted, the Tamar suddenly turns and takes a direction exactly opposite to that in which we have lately been travelling, once more almost doubling back upon itself. To avoid this long circuit we will get the man at the lodge opposite the house to ferry us across the long pool, where the river for once in a way is deep enough to be navigated, and get up over the fields towards Dunterton. At the head of this pool, just beyond a sharp 'stickle' right in the curve of the bend, rises the steepest wood about Endsleigh. The summit commands the sinuosities of the river for a great distance, as well as a wide stretch of adjacent country. We shall not be surprised, therefore, at coming upon traces of ancient fortifications—the remains of a steep bank running in an oval form to where the declivity rendered any further defence practically

useless. Nor is the 'castle,' as it is called, the only sign of aboriginal man about Endsleigh. There are barrows up in the wood over against the house, and another earthwork in the woods of Cartha Martha higher up the river. Looking across the gorge we shall see thecombe down which comes the little Cornish river Inney, a notable and well-preserved trout-stream, which divides the lands of the Duke from those of Cartha Martha, the residence of Mr. A. B. Collier, the artist. Of his highly-placed abode right on the top of the hill we shall see more by and by.

But let us get on to Dunterton, if only to escape the gad-flies, and rest awhile beneath the shade in its cool churchyard. The church itself demands little attention: the usual substantial tower with crocketed pinnacles; the usual Perpendicular windows, varied only in the chancel, which is of earlier date, by an east window of Decorated tracery. To me it is rather for "old sake's sake" than for any other reason that I like to revisit Dunterton.

. For there are pleasant recollections—alas! they date back more years than I care to number—of Dunterton Parsonage and Dunterton Church. At the former dwelt one of the kindest and most hospitable of that now nearly extinct genus—the hunting parson, long since gone over to the majority. At the latter officiated a specimen of a race also nearly extinct—the parish clerk. He wore his gray hair thick and long, *imprimis*, no doubt, to keep his poor old head warm. But this 'thatch' was sometimes turned to other uses. For instance, on one occasion the parson's candles chanced to gutter, and a gentle drip, drip of composite or perhaps tallow, I cannot say for certain, descended upon the clerk's shoulders. But the old man was no whit discomposed. He recited his part of the service with unbroken regularity, while removing with his thumbnail the spots of grease as they fell, wiping the

mess placidly *on his hair*. Poor old fellow! He is gone, too. It is long since

‘His horn was exalted in saying “Amen”’

in that sonorous tone so impressive to the younger members of the congregation.

As we descend through Woodtown farmyard, passing close to the traces of another circular earthwork, we see rising against us across the river the most precipitous hill north of Morwell Rocks, the densely-wooded steep of Cartha Martha. Were it not that one or two masses of rock thrust their hoar heads through the foliage, the scene would bear a striking resemblance to the bend of the Dart at Sharpham. For the woods are about the same height, the river flows at much the same curve, and, though not quite so still or so deep, is no narrower. High above the declivity a glimpse is caught of Cartha Martha Lodge, a veritable eyrie, whence the inhabitants may look out upon the foldings of wood and river for miles.

Soon we get up to Greystone Bridge, passing less than a mile below it in Castle Park Wood, on the opposite side of the river, yet another earthwork. Evidently the Cornu-Briton looked upon these promontories as sure places of refuge.

Greystone Bridge, not unlike Horse Bridge in appearance, is even more prettily placed—between hills rising gently from the river, for the steep woodlands have ended now, and we get them no more this side of Launceston. Indeed, from here to Poulston Bridge there is little timber at all, the river flowing down an open vale through green and fertile meadows. And he who would follow the Tamar for the next five miles will have a scramble as much as a ramble, for regular path there is none.

But before we reach Poulston Bridge there joins the Tamar, not far from Lifton village, a tributary which, for the beauty of its scenery and the historical associations inseparably connected with its once celebrated village of

Lidford, is perhaps more interesting than any of the minor streams of Devon.

For this Lid (or Lyd) rivulet, as it is called, sweeps past the mouldering walls of Lidford Castle, once 'one of the most banious, contagious, and detestable places in the realm'—of which more presently—as well as past the old mansion of Sydenham, which held out valiantly for King Charles till taken by the Puritan Colonel Holbourn in 1645. The latter is only a couple of miles beyond Lifton, and, quite leaving out of consideration its beautiful surroundings of wood and water, is well worth visiting, as one of the finest specimens of Elizabethan architecture in the west. It contains all sorts of curiosities in the way of seventeenth-century furniture, armour, and ancestral portraits, not to speak of the grand staircase and the carved panelling in the hall. And if you push back a panel you will find gaping mysteriously one of those secret passages so common in the houses constructed in those days of plot and conspiracy.

But it is some miles further up that both for scenery and historical interest the Lid is best known to fame. Here we meet the little river—a rushing trout-stream hemmed in by abrupt hills, clothed from summit to base in coppice. The scene reaches perfection at a point where a brook, coming like itself off Dartmoor, plunges to meet it over a cliff 100 feet in height—the much visited Lidford Cascade. But venture not too near the margin of the dark slate rock down which the white water rushes into the pool beneath. The ground, beautiful as it is with fern and flower, is treacherous, and I have myself seen a rash visitor borne away senseless, after being swept down the fall against the cruel rock which, midway, momentarily checks its force. So you will see that there is reason for the warning, and the many pleasure-seekers who visit this 'Woman in White' will do well to keep clear of her embrace.

Get up to the top of one of the hills above the river, and you will have a fine view indeed. There, in rugged array, are the border tors of Dartmoor; there, against the sky, on a level with you, is the ancient tower of Lidford Church, and the grim shell of that place of iniquity to which I referred just now—Lidford Castle. Here in days happily long since gone by were held in durance vile those who had offended the lords of Dartmoor Forest, or done despite to the Stannary laws, and here later the brute Jeffreys held his Bloody Assize. His name is still odious in this western land, and they will tell you that his ghost haunts the ruins in the shape of a black pig!—a curious illustration of the transmigration of souls; but then one would hardly expect the soul of Alice Lisle's murderer to inhabit the body of an animal more noble.

Yet there was good even in Jeffreys, as the following story, which I lately came across in the pages of an ancient volume,* will show. At a contested Parliamentary election for the borough of Arundel, the Government, anxious to secure the return of the Court candidate, sent down Jeffreys to browbeat the returning officer. Now this gentleman knew the person of the Judge well, but resenting his interference, hit upon the device of pretending that he did not know him, and notwithstanding the bully's protest that he was Chancellor of the Realm, ordered him from the room with these words, 'Your ungentlemanlike behaviour convinces me that it is impossible you should be the person you pretend; were you the Chancellor, you would know that you have nothing to do here, where I alone preside. Officer, turn that fellow out of Court!' And Jeffreys, for once confounded, retired.

But in the evening he sent an invitation to this intrepid mayor to attend at his inn, and on that gentleman

* *The Antiquarian Repertory*, 1780, vol. i., p. 142.

declining (being probably afraid of the consequences) came himself to see him, and, after complimenting him on his conduct, added that, though the mayor might not himself be in a position in which he could advance him, he would do what he could for his relations. And he was as good as his word, and Mr. Mayor's nephew, without delay, found himself in possession of an 'appointment to a very lucrative and honourable employment.'

As for Lidford itself, it was once a walled town, and in Saxon times not only possessed a mint, but was taxed equally with London (!), and had as many fighting-men as Totnes and Barnstaple. But the Conqueror laid it waste, and now it is the dullest of dull villages.

Below it the Lid worms its way through the gorge, a crevasse hung with ferns, and so narrow that you may bestride it at the bottom—if you can get foothold—with ease. For black as ebony, and as smooth, are the sides of the tortuous chasm through which the river gurgles and splashes downwards from one basin to another scooped in the solid rock. Seventy feet overhead is the single arch carrying the road onwards to Tavistock. Looking over you can hear the torrent, but you cannot see it, so dark is the gulf and so thick the foliage. Beautiful as the spot is, it is not free from tragedy; a maniac and a gambler have each ended their lives by leaping into the abyss.

A mile above is Kitt's Steps, another waterfall—this time made by the river itself—having a greater volume, but nothing like the height of the better known cascade. And now we pass into a moorland valley, over which rises the fine form of Brai Tor, which an enthusiastic artist has crowned with a gigantic cross of granite masonry, commemorative of the Queen's Jubilee. On the slopes at the head of this valley the Lid has its birth.

We forsook the Tamar near Poulston Bridge, and will now return to it, and pay a visit to the old town of

Launceston. But let me offer a word to any of the legal fraternity desirous of getting from the Devon to the Cornish side of the river *vid* Poulston Bridge. Old Fuller, who calls it 'a *pleasant* tradition,' relates how 'there standeth on Poulston Bridge a man of great strength and stature, with a black bill in his hand, ready to knock down all the lawyers that should offer to plant themselves in the county of Cornwall.' How this giant finds out whether a lawyer intends to 'plant himself' I do not know; perhaps he 'administers interrogatories' before 'delivering his *bill*.' However, I do not fancy that much danger is to be apprehended nowadays; either the lawyers have had him 'put in the clink' (as they call imprisonment down here) for assault, or, frightened by the adjacent railway, he has retired to join his brother giant, Tregeagle, in the morasses about Dozmare Pool.

Launceston, a mile and a half from the Tamar, is a 'city set on a hill.' It covers the sides of a steep ascent, up which the principal street climbs with as little regard for level as a Roman road. It is indeed so appallingly steep that modern nerves, or modern horseflesh, could no longer endure it, and a new road at easier gradient has been made. The town, when you get up into the heart of it, is what you would expect from the approach. The streets are narrow and tortuous, and rather picturesque, especially near the King's Arms Hotel, where a twelfth-century gateway—from the outer wall whereof there grows a goodly tree—spans the thoroughfare, the only considerable relic of the ancient walls of Dunheved,* of which it was the south gate.

Lower down is the church of St. Mary Magdalene, a fine granite building in the usual Perpendicular. Far and near it is celebrated for the rich carving of the exterior, of which nearly every stone is sculptured.

* Dunheved means the swelling hill. Launceston is *Lan Cester ton*, the church castle town.

Shields bearing letters are the device on some. 'These,' says Murray, 'together form an invocation to the saint and an apostrophe on the sacredness of the locality.' Whether this be the case I cannot say, having never taken the trouble to ascertain; and, as the shields run completely round the building, it would be a matter of time to put the inscriptions together. As for the saint herself, her effigy may be seen in a recess beneath the east window, lying in a position singularly ungraceful, the alabaster box at her side.

This beautiful church was erected, or rather re-erected, in 1524 by Sir Henry Trecarrel of Trecarrels. It is said that the stones had been prepared for his own mansion, but owing to the loss of his wife and child he gave them to the church.

The building is entered on the south by a justly-admired porch, perhaps the richest part of the whole exterior. Within it is large and roomy, but no particular architectural details strike the eye with the exception of the pillars, which for granite are unusually graceful. The nave and aisles are of equal length. There is only one monument of interest—that to Sir Hugh Piper, the Royalist, and his wife Sibylla. The red tower, the only part of the original church remaining, stands at the western end, and, in its marked simplicity, forms a strong contrast to the rest of the building.

Not far from the church, and on our way to the castle—in the Market Place—we shall pass the White Hart Hotel. This building, though undoubtedly old, is quite uninteresting; but its principal doorway will at once cause us to pause. For here, most unsuitably inserted in a brick wall faced with plaster, and doing duty as the principal entrance, is a fine Norman arch ornamented with chevron mouldings. It has a look decidedly ecclesiastical—and ecclesiastical it is, or *was*, having been at one time a portion of the Augustinian Priory, which

Bishop Warelwast, the architect of the Norman part of Exeter Cathedral, founded early in the twelfth century down in the valley below, by the banks of the Kinsey. It is nothing less than desecration to place this beautiful piece of masonry at the entrance of an inn.

The picturesque ruins of Launceston Castle occupy the most prominent site of any building in East Cornwall. They stand on a lofty knoll high above the houses, commanding, indeed, almost the whole town. Little of the outworks remain, most of the encircling wall being modern. Opposite the Town Hall, however, is an ancient gatehouse, beneath which we enter a recreation ground, once turned to less pleasant uses. It was, indeed, till about sixty years ago, the place for public executions, for Launceston was at that time the assize town, an honour now enjoyed by Bodmin. At the opposite end is another old gatehouse opening on to the New Road.

Divided from this recreation ground by palings is a prettily laid-out garden rising in terraces towards the keep, about the base of which ivy-covered fragments of a tower defending the stairway and other ruins difficult to define, are surrounded by bright flowers and well-kept shrubs. An ascent of eighty-two steps leads to the keep itself, which is circular, about forty feet high and eighteen in diameter, and with walls of enormous thickness. It is entered by a simple arch, and had formerly two floors (both of which have long since vanished), approached by a staircase, very dark, for there are no loopholes within the wall. The upper part of the tower is quite ruinous.

At a distance of about eight feet this keep is encircled by a massive wall, which appears (as there are joist-holes in the wall of the tower at about half its present height), to have been connected with the keep by a roof, thus forming a covered way. This wall also has an internal passage leading on to the top, whence there is a very fine

view of the surrounding country, bounded on the one hand by the long rugged line of Dartmoor, on the other, and much nearer, by the still more serrated range of the Cornish tors. Immediately beneath is of course the town, but one can almost throw a stone into the valley of the Kinsey 200 feet below. Beyond, up a hill nearly as steep, climbs the suburb of St. Stephen's, overshadowed by the tall tower of its handsome granite church.

Of the history of this interesting ruin I know little. An inhabitant told me that it formed the principal of thirteen castles or towers connected by a wall encircling the town, and quoted Domesday Book as his authority. I think this, however, very improbable, as the castle appears to have been *within* the walls, though it is likely enough that there were numerous watchtowers. Still from its situation the present ruin must always have been the fortalice.

And probably none of it dates back to Domesday Book, though a predecessor was certainly there in the days of the Conqueror, when Launceston Castle was held by the Earl of Moreton. Yet it is a very ancient building, the architecture throughout being late Norman, and if it did not look down upon the soldiers of Hastings, certainly knew those who, or whose brethren, had fought at Northallerton. After lapsing, even as early as the fourteenth century, into ruin, it was fortified in the seventeenth for the King, and in 1645 occupied by Sir Richard Grenville. But not for long. In March, 1646, Fairfax directed his energies against it, and the garrison surrendered. Since then its lot has been one of peace, and further decay has been as far as possible checked by the Dukes of Northumberland, High Constables under the Duchy of Cornwall, to whom since 1337 the old fortress has belonged.

We descend into the valley. Here the Kinsey, broadening into a shallow pool, is crossed by a stone foot-bridge.

Its waters almost reflect the walls of the little church of St. Thomas, in the churchyard of which are arranged a few fragments of the old priory, certainly a more appropriate resting-place than that found for the Norman arch in the town above. A few other stones are incorporated with neighbouring buildings; with these exceptions the priory has gone and left no sign.

This unfortunate Kinsey is generally, both in guide-book and geography, dubbed the Attery. How the error arose I know not, for the Attery is not even a tributary, but pours into the Tamar on the northern side of St. Stephen's Hill, a stream not only perfectly distinct from that of the diminutive Kinsey, but of greater volume.

It is time to return to the Tamar. From Launceston upwards it waters a valley pretty enough, but lacking the bold features of the wooded gorges below Greystone Bridge. The country slopes gently to the green meadows through which it winds peacefully on its course southward, for the Tamar is essentially a peaceful river, and even its noisiest stickles rarely rise above a murmur. Through this quiet valley its banks are often steep and overhanging, and there is occasionally a red richness about the soil which reminds one rather of the Exe than of its nearer and more fiery neighbours coming off Dartmoor.

A good way of seeing it is to follow the banks of the Bude Canal, which comes as near to Launceston as Wroxtton Wharf, about two miles distant. We shall then see both canal and river. And the walk along the towing-path is not only easy but pleasant, for trees and coppice fringe it a great part of the way, through which many a pleasant glimpse may be had of the river winding below.

Like most other ventures of the kind, this canal has now seen its best days. It dates from 1826, and at one time did a considerable trade, principally in the transport

of sand for manure. The principal section extends from Bude to near Holsworthy, and the part which we now follow branches away to Launceston, about five miles from the former village. In this hilly country the engineering presented no small amount of difficulty, which was surmounted in a very novel manner indeed. Instead of a series of locks, as on the larger Caledonian Canal, inclined planes were formed, up and down which the barges travelled on wheels. The principal incline is on Hobbacott Down, near Stratton. This we shall not pass, but there are three on our section which, though pigmies when compared with the giant—it is 900 feet long—on the main waterway are still upon much the same principle. We come upon the first presently, and find it a hayfield! though the holes where the rails were set are quite traceable. In an old edition of the invaluable Murray, published when the canal was in its prime, is a good description of the method devised for the *portage* of the barges from the water at the top to that at the bottom of the plane, or *vice versa*. He tells us how there were two lines of rails dipping at each end into the canal over which passed an endless chain. The barges were attached to this chain and passed on their own wheels up or down the incline, the chain being worked by water-power—at Hobbacott Down by two buckets eight feet in diameter, ‘alternately filled with water, and working in wells 225 feet in depth.’ No less than seven inclined planes were necessary to enable the barges to climb from one end of the canal and its branch to the other.

Now it is disused; in fact, on parts of it the frontages have actually been sold to proprietors of land adjacent. Railways to Launceston and Holsworthy have killed the poor canal, and the slow moving barge will float upon it no more. The tow-path is narrowing fast under encroaching vegetation, and the trees, no longer pruned,

fling their shade over the banks, and filter the sunlight glancing upon the water. Here and there an ancient barge, more picturesque possibly in decay than when sea- (or, rather, canal-) worthy, lies rotting in the shallows, or a heap or two of sand encumbers the bank from which probably the winds will alone remove it. The scene is peaceful and full of sylvan repose; still there is always a sadness about decay, and even on a bright morning this weed-grown canal preaches a sermon that is not exactly inspiring.

It is rather a relief to a silence broken only by the hum of insects to reach the point where a road passes over a bridge, and up the hill to where the church tower of Boyton rises over the trees. Let us ascend, and after a call at the humblest of hostelries, pay a visit to the well-kept little church. The tower is Norman, at any rate in part, and they say the font is Norman, too. But these Cornish fonts are so plain that in many, if not most cases, it is no easy matter to assign any particular date, and whether this particular specimen is eight or four hundred years old, I am not bold enough to say. There are the remains of a well-carved roof, and the base of a screen of which the upper part was destroyed in those iconoclastic days when 'they brake down the carven work with axes and hammers.' Above, across the fields, is the breezy rectory, whereof and of its hospitality I have the pleasantest recollections.

Returning to the towing-path we soon ascend another inclined plane, and with perhaps just a peep across the river at the churches of Luffincot and Tetcott, pass on through the woods—sometimes looking right down the wooded banks into the river—to Tamerton, a village appearing to consist mainly of a church and two or three cottages adjacent. In these western districts indeed, a village of any size is almost unknown, and the high-sounding phrase of '*church-town*'—the Cornish name for

anything where there is a church—expresses a good deal more than the reality. Often a farm and a handful of cottages with or without an alehouse make up the whole hamlet, though the *parish* may be a dozen miles across.

About this particular church-town there is nothing very interesting. The church, approached by a square opening through an old building that possibly once did duty as a priest-house, is known better by its lofty tower—a prominent object for miles up and down the Tamar Valley—than for any architectural merit. Beyond the roof of the south aisle, and a few carved bench-ends, there is no ancient work calling for mention; and as a set off perhaps the modern artist has delighted in covering the walls with texts set in scroll work of a character that certainly does not lack brilliancy. Through the meadows below the Tamar now a rivulet meanders down the valley, its waters to-day churned into a rich brown colour by the cattle that seek in its waters a refuge from the flies.

It is well to leave the canal at Bridgerule, for here it turns to the westward, quite taking us away from the river. Bridgerule is more of a village than any this side of Launceston; quite a little colony of houses cluster about the bridge which carries the road from Kilkhampton into Devonshire. Here the river is so small that in summer time I have seen its shingly bed used as a sort of standing ground for vehicles, though in the storms of winter I fancy these same vehicles would have small chance of salvation.

On the top of a hill, as usual, is the church, the most interesting in the district. The crocketed pinnacles of the tower are particularly imposing; there is a fine roof of carved oak to the porch (where are preserved the stocks), as well as to the nave and aisle. The screen, though modern, is elegant, and is surmounted by the rood, and the panels are filled with painted figures representing

the Apostles. Another divides a chapel from the church, and a third separates organ and chancel.

A dark slab of slate let into the south wall near the organ bears the following quaint epitaph :

' My marriage and my funerall,
Few months asunder may cause all
My friends to mourne, none blameth that,
Yet Mary sings magnificat.—Luke i. 46.

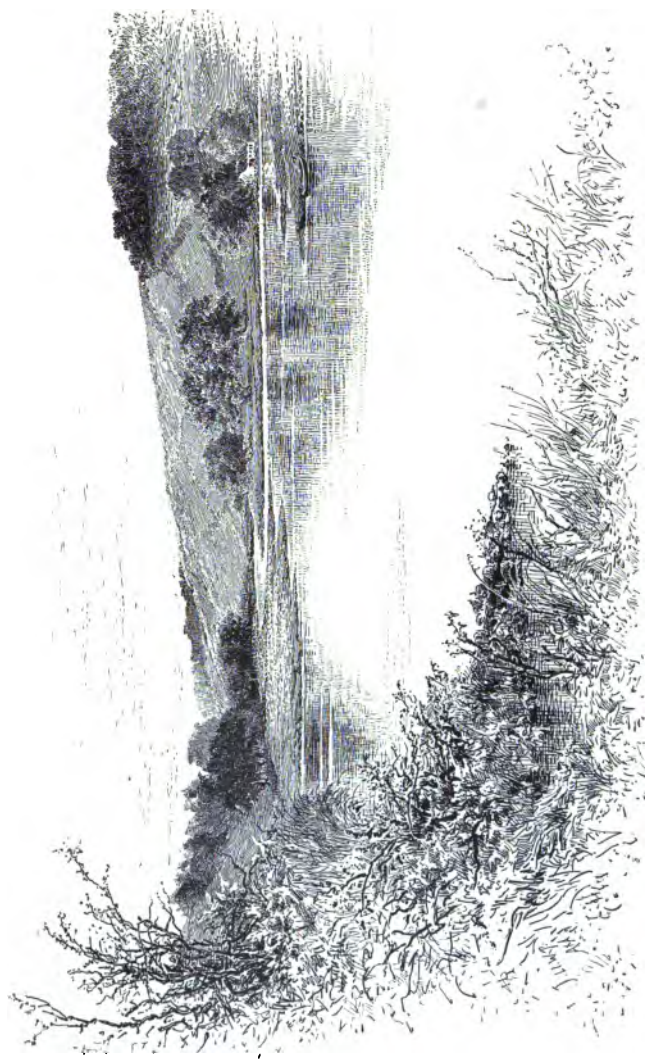
' Mary I. E. Exalted.

' Removed from this world exalted high
To that pure life of immortality ;
Blest soule thou art, what then meanes this weeping,
The mayden = wife shee's not dead, but sleeping.'

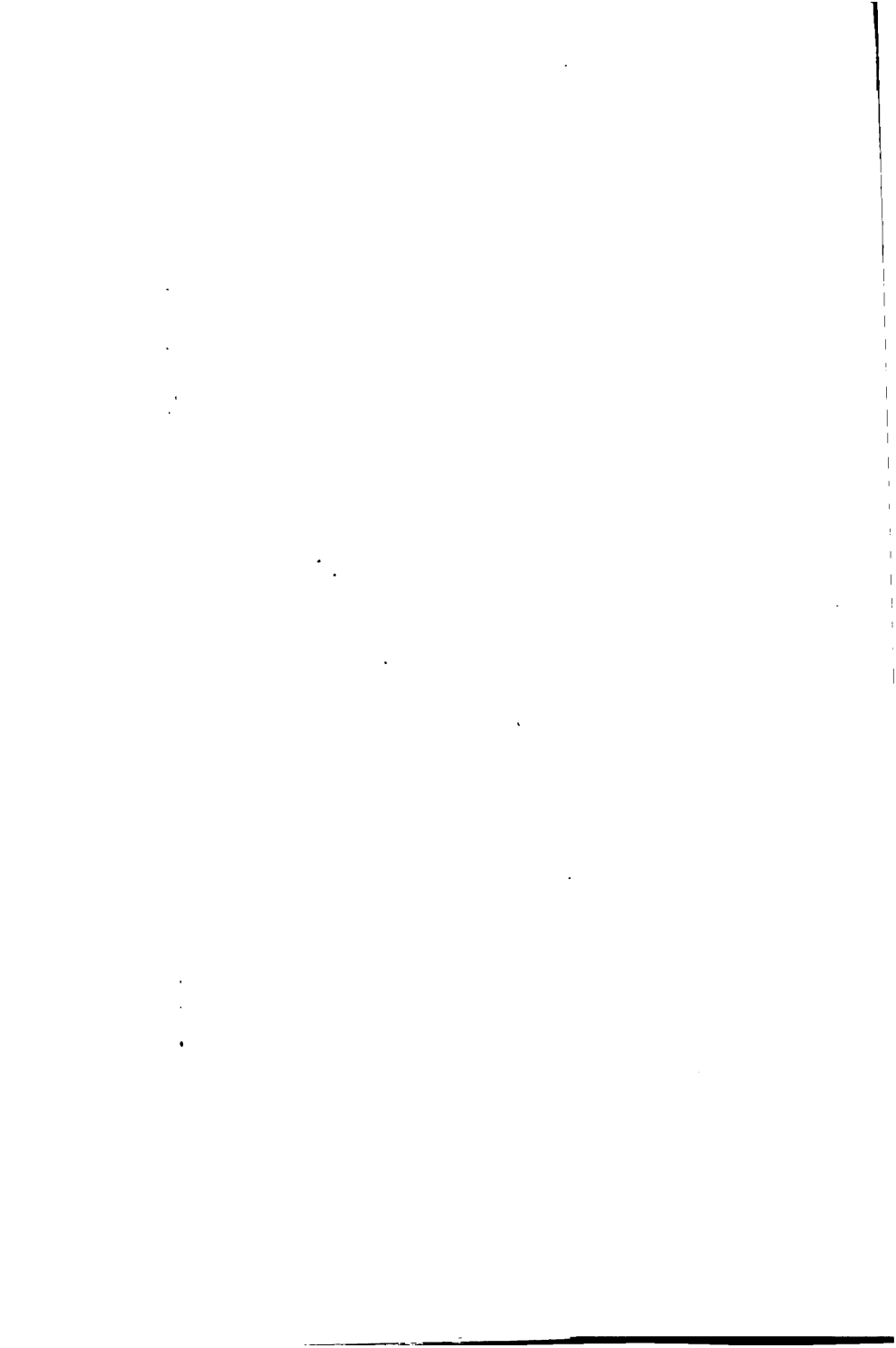
Who the 'mayden-wife' was, I know not. But the rector tells me that the escutcheon upon the tablet may also be seen at the old manor-house of Jackbear, in his parish, which—though I have not myself seen it—may perhaps be worth a visit.

From Bridgerule upwards the country is rather tame. The scenery about these borders of Devon and Cornwall consists of low hills and shallow valleys ; here and there a patch of timber ; here and there a field of gorse or even a stretch of bogland nearly profitless to the farmer, and without sufficient natural beauty to attract the artist. You will wander five miles through this kind of country, though more interesting, perhaps, along the river than elsewhere, ere you reach a prospect which can in any way lay claim to be called beautiful. And there is so little preparation that one is quite taken by surprise.

The two western counties have, as I have already said, been spoken of as lakeless ; but surely the reproach is taken away by the scene which now comes into view. About three miles north of the point where the Hols-worthy Canal crosses the infant river into Devonshire, and at a spot where the valley narrows before again widening into an amphitheatre, a long bank, so covered with wild flowers and gorse, that it appears almost natural, shuts out further view. This bank, or dam, is



LAKE ON THE TAMAR. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED, FROM A SKETCH BY J. LL. W. PAGE.



the southern boundary of a lake two-thirds of a mile long, and nearly as broad. The aspect is perfectly natural, and the surroundings, without being bold, are soft and peaceful. On the evening I saw it, the sun, a glowing ball, was dropping through a bank of haze, casting a long reflection across the waters which lay a sheet of glass faithfully mirroring the low hills, a cottage, a regiment of haycocks behind, and one or two red Devon cattle grazing on the tender grass that had sprung into being on the alluvial flats dried by the hot breath of a fortnight's drought.

It is from this lake that the feeder for the canal takes its waters; indeed, it is for the canal that it was made. There is an impression that the Tamar runs directly into the lake at one end, and out at the other. But the impression is quite erroneous. Passing beneath the bridge, at the head of the lake, it runs, or rather creeps, along the side between embankments, and falls over a kind of weir near the foot. In very dry weather the reservoir—for that, after all, is the proper name—gets no water from the river at all, but under ordinary conditions a considerable flood pours over a low wall, part of the embankment, about a quarter of a mile below the bridge. Consequently in a season of protracted drought the lake shrinks a good deal, though in this rainy corner of Great Britain its full area of seventy-five acres can seldom suffer much contraction. And it is always deep in the middle, and were it a little nearer the haunts of man, would be a capital place for boating, to say nothing of fishing, for it abounds, at least so I am told—but the yarns of fishermen must be taken *cum grano salis*—‘with eels and three-pound trout.’

Hence to Tamar Head, another three or four miles, the ground is poor walking, and even in dry weather very swampy. The country becomes bleak and has a semi-moorland aspect, and the farms are few and far

between. By and by we come to Wooley Moor, a bare expanse of coarse herbage, relieved by a little gorse and the silky plume of the cotton-grass, sure indicator of a morass. And morass there is, and in plenty; for here near the top or crown of the hill—for summit there is none—Tamar and Torridge start in life together, rising from a little pool about six feet across. To trace the former river to its birthplace is, in drought, almost impossible; for the first hundred yards and more it oozes rather than runs through the bog, passing under a turf bank and rough cart-road, and it is not until Wooley Moor is left behind that it becomes anything but a runnel. The Torridge is not much better, but the land falling away on his side the down more rapidly, he has a fairer start. The difference in the current (if such it can be called) is quaintly told in an old legend:

‘The nymphs or genii of these two springs being in a long and earnest dispute or contestation which of them was worthiest or fittest to take the southern way into the warmest climate and fattest soil, at length, after a vehement contention, both fell asleep. Torridge first awaking, ran slowly away, because he would by his silent passage (unheard) get the advantage of his brother, and so was onward well on his way ere Tamar awaked, which he presently perceiving, angry indeed (and not causeless), made after with all possible posting speed, hoping, by taking the advantage of some near way, to recover his lost ground; but therein was troubled and hindered in his swift current by many great stones dispersed everywhere (some are now apparent above the water, and never covered but when the Tamar is swollen by heavy rain). Notwithstanding this impediment and interruption, such was his violent celerity that he obtained his desire. Torridge, perceiving by his slow current he strived in vain, presently wheeled about, taking his northern course. Tamar at first, for haste, made few

indents or wheelings, having an earnest desire to visit the warmer climate ; but having once obtained the goal, disports himself wantonly.'

The local rhyme puts the story much shorter and more forcibly :

'Tarridge stole away while Tamar slept,
Tamar, he woke up, and roared and weeped.'*

However much 'roaring' there may be in wet weather, when I was told that 'Tamar sent up nearly enough water to drive a mill,' there is nothing but 'weeping,' and very little of that, in summer-time.

The spot is most uninteresting, the country bleak, and a farm and cluster of cottages on the slope to the north are the only habitations in view, though one can see for miles. Although the Atlantic is distant but an hour's walk, it is quite invisible, being shut out by the tableland behind, which, though only rising thirty feet above the spring, has a broad back, from which no doubt a good deal of water filters to swell the infant rivers.

And here we take leave of the rivers flowing southward, presently to recommence our wanderings along the banks of the northern streams—the circuitous Torridge, the more direct Taw, and last, but very far from least—for is it not the most beautiful torrent in Devonshire?—the rushing Lyn.

* I have heard the rhyme given with the names of the rivers transposed, but this is obviously a mistake.

CHAPTER XIV

DOWN THE TORRIDGE TO DOLTON.

A Winding River—East and West Putford—Bulkworthy—Woodford Bridge—Scarcity of Cider—Newton St. Petrock—Shebbeare—Bradford—Black Torrington—Sheepwash—Hatherleigh—Jasper Mayne—The Ockment—Monkokehampton—The Farmer and the Draught—Brightley Priory—Okehampton—The Castle—The Meldon Viaduct—A Sad Memorial—Meeth Church—Yew Bridge—Dolton—A Vigorous Old Man.

‘OTHERS, by long wandering, seek the Severn Sea.’ So says Tristram Risdon in his ‘Corographical Description of Devonshire,’ written nearly three hundred years ago, and, though he was at the time referring to the rivers rising on Dartmoor, the words are even more applicable to the Torridge; for if any river ever does wander, surely it is the stream that is twin with Tamar. From its source to the point where it enters the sea by Appledore is only, as the crow flies, some fifteen miles, and yet it sees fit to travel between sixty and seventy before mingling its waters with those of the Taw; so that you are nearer its mouth at Wooley Moor than when you have travelled three-quarters of its course, and may get to Appledore almost as quickly from Torridge Head as from Torrington.

Except in its lower waters, it is a river little known: ‘beyond Torrington it is a tourist’s *terra incognita*, and the Stanley has yet to come who will explore these fair wilds and bring us back the tidings.’

If you will follow me to where, a tiny stream, it comes

down the semi-moorland valley from its birthplace, I will try to be that Stanley; and although I can take you through no impenetrable forest dark even at mid-day, and can certainly introduce you to no pigmies, I can perhaps lead the way through woods just as beautiful, where the timber is stately, if not gigantic, and where *Osmunda regalis* is as plentiful as the heart of the fern-filcher can desire.

Yet there is little to see for the first few miles, for the country is tame; and we wander past high breezy fields where cultivation, even of the first order, wrings but little from the barren soil, through tracts of dull moorland where the 'pipe' of the curlew is the sound most often heard, and where the snipe is more common than the pheasant; through meandering lane and stony cart-track. Indeed, until the villages, or rather hamlets, of East and West Putford are reached, there is little scenery worth description. The 'fair wilds' are not yet reached. But the two little gray churches are pleasantly placed on the hillsides nearly facing each other, and there is enough timber to take away the generally monotonous appearance of the valley higher up. The river is, of course, a mere rivulet. Two miles below we reach Bulkworthy Bridge, close to which, amid prettily wooded surroundings, is the village that gives it its name—a cheerful little place snugly ensconced on a slope. About the church, a mile from the village, an unpretentious building with a double bell-turret in lieu of a tower, are some fine elms. Across the valley is another little church—that of Abbots Bickington, which shows by its name that it once belonged to an abbey—the abbey of Hartland.

At Hankford, in the parish of Bulkworthy, was born Sir William Hankford, Chief Justice in the reigns of Henry V. and VI.* In his latter years he suffered from

* Prince, in his 'Worthies of Devon,' says that he was the judge who committed Prince Hal, and that one of the causes that led to his violent end was a fear that the Prince, on his accession, would take revenge upon him. The judge, however, who quelled the 'mad Prince' was Gascoigne.

depression, and, weary of life, cast about, it would seem, for a means of ridding himself of it, without incurring the stigma of suicide. Sending for his forester, he reprimanded him for negligence, either real or fancied, and laid upon him strict orders to keep a close watch in his deer-park at Annery, near Torrington, and to shoot the first person who would not answer his challenge.

One dark and stormy night the keeper noticed a figure approaching. 'Stand!' he cried. There was no response; the figure moved on. The bolt sped; there was a dull thud, and the keeper hurried forward to find—the body of his master!

Soon Woodford Bridge is reached, where the Torridge prattles along gaily beneath overhanging trees, and for the next three miles is bordered on the right bank by wooded hills.

At Woodford Bridge is a snug and cheap inn, the quietest of the quiet, as, with the exception of a cottage up the slope towards Newton St. Petrock, no other habitation is in view. It is not so quiet, however, in spring and early summer, for hither the angler resorts after a long day's work at whipping the waters of the river hard by, which is now twenty feet wide, though still very shallow, save where here and there a 'stickle' has washed out a deep pool.

When the writer was a boy, Devonshire cider was almost as plentiful as Devonshire cream. But things are changed; and the thirsty wayfarer, who, after 'padding the hoof' a dozen dusty miles under a baking sun, ventures, as he nears his inn, to indulge in liquid visions of this most delightful of beverages, will very likely find himself disappointed. During a ten days' ramble in North Devon, in the July of last year, cider was not to be had at a single inn, and although there is no doubt that the apple-crop of the preceding year had been poor, still, it does seem strange that the drink of the country should be

scarcer than champagne. I suppose it is the old story—town demand and better prices. But it is hard all the same on the West Country man to be put off with—very often—indifferent beer, and to find that he must go to Exeter or Plymouth for the drink that is so much superior. Yet I know a man living 'close to the sea who has to get his fish from Grimsby—200 miles away!

But cider or no cider, the inn at Woodford Bridge is a pleasant resting-place, and we shall do well to refresh the inner man thereat, for hostelries are none too plentiful down this Torridge Valley, and the lanes are sometimes steep.

A mile below the bridge we sight the tower of the church of Newton St. Petrock, standing out against the trees on the northern hill. Here are some fine bench-ends with an unusual amount of finish about the carving, and the usual goblet-like font which *may* be Norman, but is probably—anything else. *Omne ignotum est pro antiquo.*

By the way, I wish the powers that be would leave these churches open. It is hardly likely that any rustic thief would lay sacrilegious hands on the few shabby books that lie from Sunday to Sunday on the ledges, and there is generally nothing else to steal. It is annoying to have to choose between walking half a mile or so to the parsonage for the key, or to be compelled (morally) to 'offer a gratuity,' as the railway companies elegantly put it, to some ancient individual who will, as likely as not, insist on accompanying you, and bore you to death with a more or less garbled account of the building.

From the churchyard of St. Petrock there is a fine view of the wooded valley, with Dartmoor closing the opening to the south-east, where the Torridge makes that enormous bend which distinguishes it from all the other rivers of Devon.

Shebbeare, the next village this side the river, has a church as melancholy as the village itself—a doleful-

looking quadrangle, with two of the houses in ruins on the top of a steep hill. Here is a Nonconformist college—a fact duly advertised at Okehampton Station, where a large notice-board, made as much as possible after the pattern of those on which are painted the names of the stations, tells the faithful to ‘Change for the Bible Christian College, Shebbeare.’

But Bradford, on the other side of the valley, is worth a visit, for here the church, instead of being neglected, has been well restored, and, though in other respects Perpendicular, is entered through a Norman doorway. And at the corner, where the road to the church and farm joins that leading to the village, stands an ancient granite cross with chamfered edges. It is about five feet high, and rises from a circular and now grass-grown calvary. The history is unknown, but as it is said that an abbey once stood on the site of the church—of which, perhaps, the Norman door forms the relict—it may have marked, in this direction, the precincts.

It is a mile back to the river, along which or (which will be far easier) by lane we come to where the tower of Black Torrington Church crowns the wooded height above Coham, a house seated among some of the finest timber on the upper waters of the Torridge. Here once lived the family of Coham—their monuments are in the church above—but the property has now passed into other hands. Between it and the church a deep combe runs off nearly at right angles to the river, watered by a little brook, which flows through the greenest of meadows to join his big brother in the broader meads below. Across the mouth, and up through a wood of beeches covering the hillside, winds a shadowy carriage-road. Whether it be a trespass to use it I do not know, and did not inquire, but I fancy that it is public, and it is certainly the pleasantest way of getting at Black Torrington.

This village is really, for these parts, quite a large place. Not only is there more than one inn, but it actually rises to the dignity of a brewery. The poor condition of the church, where the surroundings speak of comfort, if not affluence, is therefore noticeable. It stands sadly in need of restoration, for the windows are, with few exceptions, of the poorest Perpendicular, and the pews are 'horse-boxes.' Although of a fair size, the building has few points of interest, the principal being the waggon roof of the south aisle, where the ribs and bosses are carved, and—with rather questionable taste—painted in yellow, blue, and red.

As we descend the hill to the bridge, over the now deepening river, we see facing us the village of Sheepwash—hideous name, and none too beautiful village—but with a pretty little Early English church, successor to an older building that had passed into so decrepit a condition that tinkering was found to be useless, and down it had to come. Hence there is another pretty view, and across the wooded river the church and village we have just left are seen to advantage.

It is so long since we have seen a town that it is quite exciting, on reaching Hill Bridge, to find that we are within two miles of Hatherleigh. Not that Hatherleigh, when we reach it, is very hilarious: it is a poor little town, whose prosperity (if it ever had any) is a thing of the past. Every census shows a diminished population, and unless the railway reaches it—at present it is nearly eight miles distant—the 'downgrade movement' must continue. Yet the old-fashioned street, straggling up the steep hill—they build everything on a hill in this part of Devon—is picturesque, and the view over the fertile vale of the Ockment to Cosdon Beacon and Yes Tor magnificent.

Except that the church has a spire, a rather unusual feature in North and Mid Devon, there is nothing worth seeing about the exterior, and still less in the interior.

The only 'worthy' of Hatherleigh was one Jasper Mayne, a poet-parson of the seventeenth century. He was an ardent Royalist, and in 1648, when he had reached the age of forty-four, his loyalty caused him to lose his studentship at Christchurch, where, however, he afterwards returned as canon. The loyalty of this good divine appears to have been quite equalled by his eccentricity. An instance is shown in the legacy to a faithful servant. Whether the man was not free from suspicion of ulterior motives, or pure mischief moved the testator, I know not, but on his death-bed he sent for him, and after informing him that he had bequeathed him a trunk, handed him the key with these words, 'Stephen, my lad, take this; it opens the trunk I have left you, in which you will find something to make you drink when I am no more.' Jasper breathed his last: the box was opened, and found to contain a *red herring*!

A mile and a half below Hele Bridge Torridge receives his principal tributary, the Ockment. This is a beautiful stream, and well worth following up to its source upon Dartmoor. And it is more or less wooded all the way, that is, until you reach the confines of the moor itself, where no one expects to see timber, though even in the wild slopes of Okehampton Park there is coppice along its banks, and holly and mountain-ash dotting the hill above. Three miles from its confluence with the Torridge is the village of Monkokehampton—the name is almost as long as the village—where in days of yore the monks of Tavistock had a chapel, of which some mounds alone remain. The name also survives in Monk's Mill, on the other side of the stream, an ancient and very dilapidated building.

Above the site of the chapel, pleasantly placed among trees, is the well-kept church, which shows nothing of times monkish except the tower. It has been rebuilt, and amongst other new things about it is an oak reredos given

by the late Earl of Iddesleigh in memory of his brother, a former rector. An amusing story is told of the little window giving light to the pulpit. The inner pane is of stained glass, the outer is transparent. One Sunday, when the inner pane was open, a farmer suddenly left the church, and when asked the reason, replied that he 'couldn't stand the draught.' The old fellow seeing the inner window open, and not knowing that there was an outer pane, came to the conclusion that he was getting more air than was good for him. It seems that he really *did* take cold, and the interesting question arises, whether a cold can be produced by a draught that has no existence save in the imagination. I commend the point to the consideration of the British Association. It is, at any rate, as important a point as that of the 'prehensibility of babies' discussed in the last session.

Passing the villages of Jacobstow and Exbourne, we reach the hamlet of Brightley, a few cottages lying at the northern end of the steep woods of the Oaklands estate, which extend from this spot to Okehampton. Divided from the hamlet but by the road, is an abrupt piece of moor which looks as if it had wandered from Dartmoor, now close at hand. It was, I suppose, this barren land which caused the monks of Brightley to complain that the soil was so poor that they could not keep body and soul together, so that they left to find more comfortable quarters at Forde.*

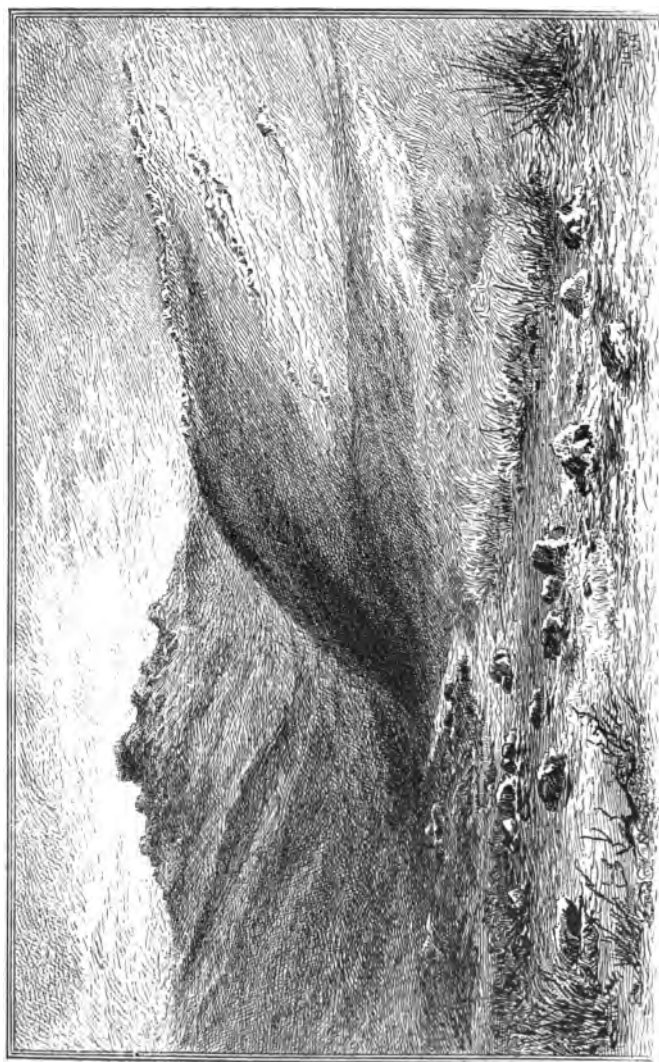
Of Brightley Priory there is very little left. If you cross the river by the stone bridge and pass through the barton, you will find a rude arch blocked with masonry, and a bit of a doorway in the barn, and this is all. Whether the arch is Saxon, as some say, I do not pretend to decide, but I should say Norman at the earliest is the style (such as it is) of the architecture. A stone inscribed HIC JACED ROBER CUB DE MOIE B, dug up beneath the

* See Forde Abbey.

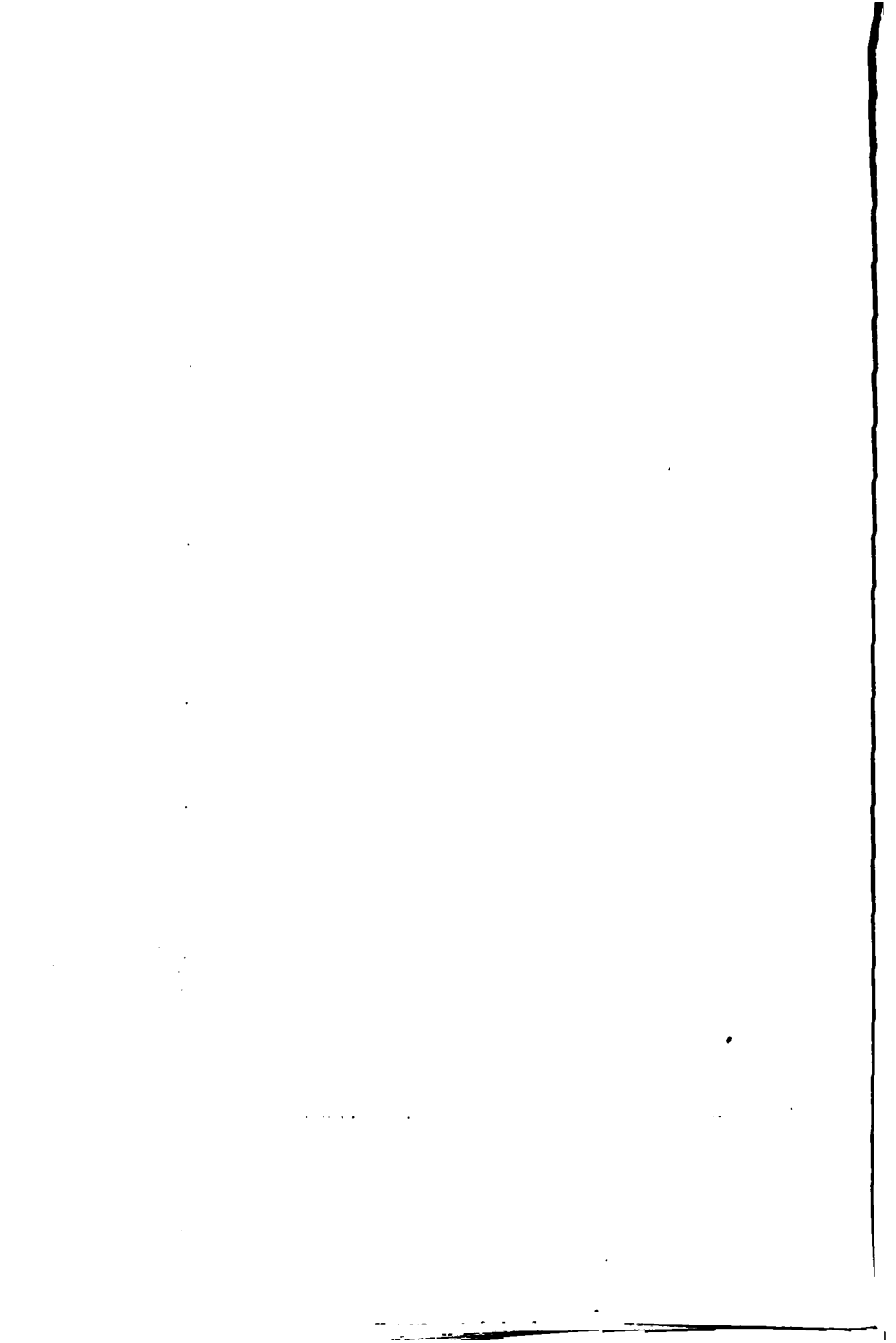
chancel of Okehampton Church, and set in the eastern wall of that building, is supposed to have once covered the remains of a Brightley ecclesiastic, though what CUB means no one seems to know.

From Brightley Bridge there is a delightful walk through the woods to Okehampton — woods that in springtime are yellow with daffodil, which love the marshy places down by the river. If, when the south lodge at Oaklands is reached, permission can be gained to pass through the park in front of the great sandstone mansion, with its pillared front and gigantic porch, the traveller will have had woodland for a long two miles. Sometimes, especially in the lower woods, the path climbs high above the river, and you look down fifty feet or so upon the rushing waters (for the Ockment carries little); and see through a framework of branches the great mass of Cosdon Beacon, or more shapely Yes Tor rising high across the vale.

Of Okehampton town, so unkindly treated by Kingsley in 'Westward Ho!' I have written in former works. It is the Ochementone of Domesday—the town on the Ockment—and is therefore 'no new thing.' Lying in the bottom, right under the towering buttresses of the moor, with the Ockment, which here divides into two heads, coming down valleys to the east and west—valleys of wood and rock, of grass slope and oak coppice—its surroundings are pleasant, nor is the town itself—*pace* Kingsley—unpicturesque. The church, as usual on a hill, and approached by a fine avenue of beeches, is a good climb from the town, but 'weak-legs' may worship at the Corporation Chapel—a building which stands in the middle of the principal street. The weather-beaten tower dates from the fifteenth century, but the body of the chapel was rebuilt in 1862. The church itself is not much older, dating but from 1844, when the whole building, with the exception, fortu-



ON THE OCKMENT. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED, FROM A SKETCH BY J. LL. W. PAGE.



nately, of the handsome granite tower, was destroyed by fire.

There is an old town-hall, bearing in a gable the borough arms—formerly those of the Norman lords of the castle—but with the exception of some carved paneling in a house, bearing at one end the initials of B. G. (Benjamin Geare, Mayor in 1673), and a little more in the chapel, there is not much in the town itself that will interest the antiquary.

But if we follow the river another half-mile or so to where it sweeps beneath the fellside called Okehampton Park, we shall see one of the oldest as well as one of the most picturesque ruins in Devonshire. High on a wooded knoll, commanding the valley east and west, stands the keep of the stronghold of De Redvers, and below, half hidden in foliage, and covered with kindly ivy, are the mouldering remains of chapel, banqueting-hall, and other buildings. The square keep appears to be late Norman; the rest of the buildings are for the most part Early English and Perpendicular. The whole, with its leafy surroundings, presents a most attractive picture, and, alas! for the prose of it, it only costs threepence to see.

Above the castle the graceful Meldon Viaduct, which carries the South-Western Railway at a height of 160 feet above the torrent, soon comes into view, and beyond it the Ockment descends a grand moorland valley, at the head of which closes in the immense hill of Ammicombe, some 1,800 feet high. Round the corner the stream is divided by the 'Island of Rocks,' a mass of granite boulders, mountain-ash, and briony, overshadowed by the crags of Black Tor. Far up at the head of the wild glen beyond, overlooked by nothing but a swelling or two of peat and heather, surrounded by morass, and in a desolation that has few equals in Great Britain, the Ockment trickles out of mysterious Cranmere Pool.

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A few yards from the meeting of Ockment with Torridge, we come upon a sad memorial. In a field washed on the one hand by the former river, on the other by the latter, and just beyond a gorse brake, stands a small granite cross mounted on a calvary of three steps. The inscription tells the story: 'George Christopher Easton drowned in this pool whilst fishing. "He showed me a pure river of water of life," Rev. xxii. 1.' The fatal pool is in the larger river; on the opposite shore the bank scooped out by the rush of freshets rises high above the flood. At the back, separated but by a narrow strip of meadow, a range of wooded hills follows the windings of the river for miles.

There is another cross almost within gunshot. At the tail of the pool there is a ford, to which descends a steep lane. On the left-hand side of this lane stands the cross—an ancient granite monument—its chamfered edges worn almost round by the ravages of time. It is about six feet high, and, like most of these Devonshire wayside crosses, destitute of all ornament. Its history I know not.

We will, if on this side the river, wade across at the ford—the stones are seldom above water—and climb the stony lane leading into the highroad to Torrington, for at Meeth there is a church worth seeing, if only as affording a complete study of the edifices in which our forefathers were content to worship. Here is the 'three-decker' pulpit with sounding-board overhead, the lofty reading-desk, the ponderous gallery across the west end, and the royal arms, magnificent in plaster, with a snub-nosed cherub surmounting the whole. Both walls and roof are generously whitewashed, but the lime has fortunately spared the ribs of the waggon roof, where are some curious bosses, as well as a handsome marble monument to one Prudence Jennefee Lamb, representing an angel bearing a female figure heavenward. It is a pity that the church-

wardens did not spare the ribs and bosses in the porch, which are as white as lime can make them. And why did they not give the parish stocks a coat while they were about it? The inner doorway is Norman, and is, of course, the oldest part of the building. The approach to the church is through an avenue of limes, which, judging from their gnarled trunks, are not of yesterday.

Skirting the woodland, we drop to Yew Bridge, one of the prettiest spots on the Torridge. Here the hills close in upon the river, and the three-arched bridge is set in a verdant valley, the slopes above it covered with larch, while below the stream makes a big bend beneath the more ancient timber of Lord Clinton's park of Huish.

In strong contrast to Meeth is the little church of Dolton high up above Yew Bridge. Pretty as it is, we should hardly go out of our way to visit it were it not for the font, which is quite a curiosity, and is of an age so venerable that one writer thinks it may be from a thousand to twelve hundred years old.

It is formed out of a sculptured fragment, broader at top than bottom, set upside-down on a massive rectangular base, also sculptured. The device, upon the upper part especially, consists of interlacing work very similar to that on early Christian crosses. I have seen work bearing a strong resemblance on Maclean's Cross at Iona, said to be the oldest in Scotland; but the sculpture most closely answering is that on the so-called Runic crosses at Kirk Braddan in the Isle of Man.

It is quite a relief to find in Dolton Church a change from the usual Perpendicular. The style of architecture is Decorated, with massive octagonal pillars. The whole building has been tastefully restored.

On the right of the western arch is a tablet bearing a curious inscription :

'To the memory of William Knaplock, Master of Arts and of the Free Schoole of Crediton, Rector of this church *and of hymselfe*, y^e comfort of his charge in his Life, their Crosse in his death, which fell fataly to his Friends and Family on y^e 8 of October, 1664. Ætatis suæ 66.

'Ware this a precious stone could angels write
thy Epitaph, then thou wouldst have thy right,
thou great Example of whatever shines
in Men, in Scholers, Christians or Devines.
y^e world hath lost thy patterne, parts & payns,
only to thy blest soule this losse is gaines ;
thy Joyes, our Greifes, cannot be here exprest,
we, therefore, restles, leave thee to thy rest.'

The words are laudatory enough in all conscience, but surely a man who was 'Rector of hymselfe' deserves them !

The old folk in these high-placed breezy villages are wonderfully hale and hearty. I remember meeting an old man at the principal inn—for Dalton is a good-sized village—who, though seventy-nine years of age, had walked to Instow and back, a distance of thirty-two miles, only a fortnight before. And he did the distance in twelve hours ! Not much like the fourscore of the Psalmist, is it ?

CHAPTER XV

THE TORRIDGE : FROM DOLTON TO APPLIEDORE.

Beaford—The Approach to Torrington—Castle Hill—Torrington—A Terrible Explosion—John Howe—Frithelstock Priory—Monkleigh—Wear Giffard—Annery and Bishop Stapledon—Landcross and General Monk—Bideford—Bideford Bridge—Sir Richard Grenville—Chudleigh's Fort—Some Curious Epitaphs—Down the Estuary—Appledore—Northam—Westward Ho !

LEAVING Dolton to return once more to the Torridge Valley, we pass through Beaford, another elevated village, from which you can see half over Devonshire. Here the church tower is capped by a short spire of slate. Within the building the Perpendicular pillars are, for granite, rather slender, and the capitals well carved. It seems strange that so far from Dartmoor granite should be used at all. The effect of these pillars is, however, entirely spoilt by a hideous black stove-pipe passing along them nearly the whole length of the building. There is a good oak roof to the south aisle, the ribs supported by angels holding shields, the remains of a similar roof to the nave and chancel, and an ancient but plain font. There is a pretty pinnacled porch. The stocks still moulder in the churchyard.

I have never seen so many stocks as in these North Devon villages. I suppose in these out-of-the-world places they were used to a later date than in communities nearer civilization. But no longer are they a terror to the juvenile sinner.

Below Beaford Wood, where there is a weir, the widening river flows through lovely scenery. The hills sink abruptly to the water, generally heavily timbered, though here and there fields green with grass or yellow with corn stretch up to the sky-line. Past all this the Torridge winds serpent-like, making three or four long curves in as many miles. From the declivity above the spot where the Yeo joins it below Yelland Farm is one of the finest river scenes in the West. Crossing the stone bridge over the Yeo, itself a prettily-wooded stream, we climb a long ascent—the road to Torrington. From the top, where the road emerges from the wood on to a precipitous slope, where the axe has been at work, we look right down upon the river, moving now in long pools, now in ‘stickles’ 150 feet below. These wooded hills, which rival in height those about Endsleigh, are the haunt of the Osmunda, which here has some chance, as the Hon. Mark Rolle will not allow them to be removed. Then we descend to a lofty bridge of three arches, and see above us on the top of a declivity, rising mountainous from the river, and covered with heather, gorse, and bracken, the town of Torrington.

It is a grand view. Above the bridge the river can be seen but for a short distance coming round the curve, above which rise the dense woods of Darkham, with the tall tower of Little Torrington Church prominent against the sky-line. Close to us, hard by the bridge, are the town mills, battlements giving the buildings a picturesque look, especially when viewed from a little distance. Right opposite, on the side of Castle Hill, rises an obelisk erected to commemorate Waterloo, while above, cresting the height, is the low parapet of the castle itself, with a few houses and the spire of the church beyond. At the base of the declivity flows the river, wide but shallow, hastening onwards to Taddyport Bridge on the other side of the hill.

Torrington—or, to give it the full name, *Great Torrington*—is a bright, cheerful town of between three and four thousand inhabitants, and, judging from its elevated position, should be one of the healthiest places in Devonshire. Nor has trade altogether forsaken it for more populous centres, as is the case with so many little towns, for it boasts a glove-factory giving employment to a good many hands.

Of the oldest building—the castle—the parapet-wall surrounding the bowling-green is the only part remaining. The Torrington folk are great at bowls, and the spot is a favourite recreation-ground, not only for those engaged in that game, but for others who may watch the sport or enjoy the beautiful view below as they list.

Not much is known of this castle beyond the fact that it was built by one Richard de Merton—Merton is the parish above Little Torrington—in the reign of Edward III. There were ruins of a chapel in the last century, but these were pulled down in 1780.

In the history of the town, the Rebellion occupies a prominent position. Here, in 1643, Colonel Digby, with a thousand Royalists, routed fifteen hundred Roundheads, who, in the words of Clarendon, ‘spread themselves over the country, bearing frightful marks of the fray, and telling strange stories of the horror and fear which had seized them, although nobody had seen above six of the enemy that charged them.’ After this success, Barnstaple, Bideford, and Appledore fell to the Royal arms. But the invincible was coming. In 1646 Fairfax surprised Lord Hopton, and this time Royalist succumbed to Roundhead. And there was an awful catastrophe. The church, which for a time the Royalists had converted into a powder-magazine, was, with 200 prisoners and their guards, blown into the air by an accidental explosion. Well may the capture of Torrington have been ‘the death-blow of the King’s cause in the West’! The

Parliamentarians were not slow to improve the occasion. Their chaplain, Master Hugh Peters, held forth in the market-place, and—the mob at Torrington being, as the mob elsewhere, inclined to the winning side—gained ‘many converts to the Parliamentary cause.’

Of the old church, therefore, nothing but a small piece at the eastern end of the south aisle remains. The present structure, except the modern tower and spire, dates from the seventeenth century, but there is happily no suggestion of the hideous taste which characterizes the architecture of that period. But it was restored some forty years ago, and I strongly suspect that the Decorated windows and other work were an improvement upon the style then found existing. However that may be, the church is handsome, and has a fine reredos representing the Last Supper.

At the east end of the churchyard is an epitaph curious enough in itself, but which has, I fancy, become celebrated rather for the comment written upon it than for its own quaintness. It runs thus :

‘She was—my words are wanting to say what !
Think what a woman should be—she was that.’

which provoked the following unkind reply :

‘A woman should be both a wife and mother ;
But Jenny Jones was neither one nor t’other.’*

The name on the tombstone is Charlotte Laimbeer, and she is described as being the wife of a shoemaker. Whether she was really Jenny Jones, and thus deserved the aspersion cast upon her, the old sexton did not know, or would not say.

Torrington Church was given by Henry VIII. to Cardinal Wolsey, who presented it to Christ Church, Oxford. He was himself for seven years the incumbent. But a better, if less distinguished, incumbent was John

* *Trans. Dev. Assoc.*, vol. viii., from *Notes and Queries*.

Howe, 'a man of rare ability, of exalted piety, of unquestionable honesty, of burning zeal in the great cause which he upheld—he was a Presbyterian—and yet withal of a strong common-sense and of a liberalism which could do justice to the merits of opponents.'* After graduating at Cambridge he moved to Oxford, where he took a fellowship at Magdalen College. After this he was appointed to Torrington, where he did so much good that his repute came to the ears of Cromwell, who in 1656 made him his chaplain. The manner in which he obtained this appointment is curious. The Protector gave him no time for preparation, but handed him the text while the Psalm was being sung before the sermon. The parson had his revenge; he preached for *two hours* without pause, and was calmly turning the hour-glass for the third time when Cromwell signed to him to stop.

Howe did not like Whitehall, and, his parishioners entreating him to return, he obtained permission to spend three months of the year at Torrington, appointing a substitute for the remainder of the time. One wonders that he retained the chaplaincy at all, for Cromwell's temper was not long-suffering, and the intrepid doctor had no hesitation in denouncing the fanatical notions prevailing at the Puritan Court. However, he preached while the Protector frowned, and did not finally return to Torrington till 1659, when Richard Cromwell was deposed.

In 1660 the Mayor accused him of sedition, but on his trial he was acquitted—'one of his accusers left the town, and the other cut his throat, and was buried in a cross-road.' In 1662 he was ejected by the Act of Uniformity, 'not so much because he could not conscientiously conform himself, as that he objected to the exclusive character of that famous Act.'

But having taken the oath under the Five Miles Act,

* 'History of Great Torrington,' by Rev. F. T. Colby, *Trans. Dev. Assoc.*, vol. vii.

in 1666 he was free to choose his residence, and, the Bishop not interfering, he preached at the houses of the gentry, publishing two years later his 'Torrington Sermons.' In 1670 he went to Dublin as domestic chaplain to Lord Masserene, but removed to London in 1676, where he preached to the Presbyterians at Haberdashers' Hall, Staining Lane. Between 1681 and 1685 the Nonconformists were so much persecuted that Howe dare not appear in the streets. So in the latter year he went abroad with Lord Wharton, and settled at Utrecht, where he kept a boarding-house, and assisted in the services at the English Church, but returned to England in time to head the list of London Nonconformist divines in an address to William of Orange. His eventful life came to a close in 1705.*

And Torrington has memories of two other worthies—Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. Johnson. Sir Joshua had married sisters residing there, and on one occasion brought the lexicographer to visit them. The old bear's manners appear to have been as peculiar at Torrington as in Fleet Street. When introduced to Mr. Wickey, the master of the Grammar School, he turned his back upon him, remarking that he *did not like his name!*

Leaving the bridge and hamlet of Taddyport with its dismal little church in the depths below, we descend to Rothern Bridge, where the scenery is not improved by the railway. Here for awhile we leave the river, and get up the western hill to Frithelstock. Here are the ruins of a priory founded in the reign of Henry III. by Robert de Campo Bello, or Beauchamp. The monks were of the Augustine Order, and came from Hartland Abbey.

There is not much of it left. The east wall has disappeared altogether, but the western remains, and is

* 'Dictionary of National Biography,' vol. xxviii., p. 85. Howe's powers of sarcasm were considerable, and it is said that he once asked a profane courtier to allow him to swear the next oath.

pierced by three long lancet windows, beneath which is an Early English doorway. The south wall is very ruinous, but in it are portions of a lofty arch, whether door or window it is difficult to determine, but probably from its position the former. In the north wall are two more lancet windows and remains of divers arches filled in with masonry. The building in its present condition measures about ninety feet by twenty-one, and is picturesque with ivy.

Entering the church, which the priory almost touches, a holy-water stoup will be noticed in the porch. The pillars are well carved, and have canopied niches—of course empty. The font, of which the stem is carved with a zigzag ornament, seems to be Norman, though there is no other Norman work in the church, which, with the exception of a Decorated chancel, is throughout Perpendicular. There are a few good bench-ends, and on the southern wall the royal arms in plaster—an almost exact counterpart to the work of art at Meeth—will delight (?) the eye. The tower arch is blocked, quite spoiling the western end.

Close to church and priory—the latter, by the way, is known locally as Cloister Hall—is an old farm with one or two massive oak doorways. None of the present building would seem to be more than two centuries old. but the farmer's wife tells me that a portion boasting a far greater antiquity was destroyed by fire a few years ago. There is no doubt that this building was connected with the ruin adjoining, though whether the date 'in modern letters over the porch—1224—has been placed there to mark the time of the erection of the older building, I do not know.

From the high ground near Frithelstock, there is a wide view of the surrounding country. Torrington is conspicuous on the top of its breezy common; the church of Little Torrington is again seen to the south, that of

Monkleigh is still more conspicuous across the combe to the north. The river we may trace by its deep winding valley, wooded as usual; and we can almost see the spot where below Monkleigh it is spanned by Lord Rolle's aqueduct, constructed to carry the now disused Bideford canal across the valley.

There is a pleasant walk through the fields to Monkleigh. The lofty church tower is seen far and near, and commands a view down the valley to the sea beyond the estuary of the Torridge. The church contains a fine screen across the south aisle, and there are a few carved bench-ends.

And now we will get down to Wear Gifford, which takes its name from a weir across the river a little above the village. This dams back the water for some distance, with the result that immediately below the Torridge is so shallow that in dry weather it may be crossed on stepping-stones.

Wear Gifford is a very pretty village, and its white cottages stand out well against the background of hill and wood. The Perpendicular church, a mile from the village, close to the river, has an Early English east window, and some well-carved bench-ends. There is a great painted monument to the Fortescues on the wall of the south aisle, with a long, and as usual highly complimentary, piece of poetry. The faces in the medallions on each side of the kneeling figures have an extraordinary family likeness to each other, and it looks rather as if one mould had been used for the females, and another for the males, the artist by a touch here and there making the necessary alterations. In recesses of the wall of the nave are recumbent effigies of a nameless lord and his lady, each attended by a very diminutive angel.

Of more interest than the church is the ancient house close at hand, which is as old as the fifteenth century. It is the property of Earl Fortescue, who found it a

farm-house, and restored it as far as was possible to its former estate. The courtyard wall was destroyed in the Rebellion, but the gatehouse still remains, and has an interesting door divided into many panels, each containing a wooden lozenge studded with nails, while on the upper part are two dogs carved in high relief, supporting a shield.

Within the house—which, set in beautiful grounds, and covered with climbing plants, is extremely picturesque—is some of the finest carved panelling in the country, and the oaken roof of the hall has for its richness been compared* to that of Henry VII.'s chapel at Westminster, though the device is altogether different.

Across the river is Annery, the seat of that Sir William Hankford to whose tragic end I have already referred. It was also the birthplace of Walter Stapledon, Bishop of Exeter, and founder of Exeter College, Oxford. When in 1326 Edward II. quarrelled with his Queen and barons, this prelate threw in his lot with the King, and was made *custos* of the city of London. On the King's retreat to London, the insurgents entered the city, and Stapledon sought sanctuary in St. Paul's. But Isabella and her partisans had little respect for holy places; the poor man was dragged forth to the Cross in Cheapside, and there despatched.

Just below Wear Gifford we reach the last bridge on the Torridge; the Halfpenny Bridge it is called, from the toll exacted by the builders, Lord Fortescue and others. Here the Torridge has changed its character of a pellucid stream, and meanders seaward between high banks of mud. When the tide is coming up the river the rush against the piers of this bridge is tremendous, and the water dirty in the extreme. But the scenery is as pretty as ever, and the Bideford road across the bridge passes along a wooded hillside with the most lovely glimpses of the river winding below.

* Murray.

Presently comes into view the little village of Landcross, celebrated as the birthplace of General Monk, an honour, by the way, also claimed by Potheridge, in the parish of Merton, where his family certainly lived, and where, when he became Duke of Albemarle, he rebuilt the house (of which nothing but the stables now remain) in a style of great magnificence. Some of the Landcross folk say that he was brought to their village when but three days old ; but, as Potheridge is eight or nine miles distant by road, it seems hardly likely that a new-born infant would have been brought so far, especially when one considers what these country lanes must have been in the days of James I. The house pointed out as his birthplace is close to the parsonage, and is now a whitewashed cottage. Over the mantelpiece in the principal room is some plaster scroll-work supporting an oval medallion, which the present tenant pointed out as the General's coat-of-arms ! As the medallion is *blank*, I fear she is wrong.

The church a little higher up the hill is a very humble structure indeed, of the smallest proportions, and with an extraordinarily clumsy-looking bell-turret, roofed with slate, stuck on to the gable at the west end. Here, at any rate, Monk was christened, his name being recorded in the register.

Few men have had so difficult a part to play as George Monk, who may well be called the King-maker of the seventeenth century. For without his influence it is a question whether the exiled Charles Stuart would ever have become Charles II.—whether the Restoration of 1660 would not have been indefinitely postponed. He was born in 1608, and first served under his relation, Sir Richard Grenville, in the Netherlands. In 1639 he joined the forces of Charles I., where he held the rank of Colonel, and two years later was with the army sent against the Irish insurgents, when he acquitted himself so well that he was made Governor of Dublin. Returning to England,

he was despatched to relieve Nantwich, but was taken prisoner, and till 1646 remained in durance vile in the Tower of London. He was ultimately released on promising to join the Parliamentary army, which, as the King's hopes were now quite shattered, he agreed to do. Under Cromwell he rose to the rank of Lieutenant-general, and was given the command of the army in Scotland. It seems marvellous that Cromwell, who knew of his Royalist proclivities, and entertained a high opinion of his military genius, should have so far trusted him.

When Cromwell died, Monk said not a word, but marched his army across the border. And now he was courted by both Royalist and Roundhead, but, acting with his usual caution and reserve, he would not declare himself until the moderate party clamoured for a free Parliament, to which, as he pretty well knew what the upshot would be, he consented. This Parliament voted—it scarcely dared do otherwise with an army waiting at its very doors—for the recall of the Prince, and Monk, who had already arranged matters with the exile, met him at Dover at the end of May, 1660, and was by him, says Hume, ‘cordially embraced.’ Until the King was firmly seated on the throne, Monk refused all gifts and dignities. Ultimately he accepted the dukedom of Albemarle, with a pension of £1,000 a year, and afterwards shared with Prince Rupert the post of Admiral of the Fleet, in 1666 defeating the Dutch fleet off the mouth of the Thames, the battle lasting four days. When the plague broke out he refused to leave the city, an action which greatly increased his popularity. He died on January 3, 1670, at Newhall in Essex, and with him England lost one of the most remarkable, if not one of the greatest, of her sons. Even Hume, that historian of the Stuarts, thinks that ‘his temporary dissimulation, being absolutely necessary, could scarcely be blamable.’ Be that as it may, we shall hardly, I think, agree with

Fox's sweeping remark that 'personal courage appears to have been Monk's only virtue; reserve and dissimulation made up the whole stock of his wisdom.' Surely such a character as this would never have won from his soldiers the name of '*honest* George Monk,' a title which clung to him till his death.*

At the bottom of Landcross Hill another Yeo enters the Torridge, spanned by an ugly iron bridge, and as we descend to it the head of the estuary suddenly appears bridged by a structure still uglier—the viaduct of the Torrington railway. In a few minutes, as we pass up the riverside road, the flood broadens, and through the interlacing branches is caught the first view of Bideford, two miles away.

'All who have travelled through the delicious scenery of North Devon must needs know the little white town of Bideford, which slopes upwards from its broad tide river paved with yellow sands and many-arched old bridge, where salmon wait for autumn floods, towards the pleasant upland on the west. Above the town the hills close in, enshrined with deep oak woods, through which juts here and there a crag of fern-fringed slate; below they lower, and open more and more in softly-rounded knolls and fertile squares of red and green, till they sink into the wide expanse of hazy flats, rich salt marshes, and rolling sand-hills, where Torridge joins her sister Taw, and both together flow quietly towards the broad surges of the bar, and the everlasting thunder of the long Atlantic swell.'

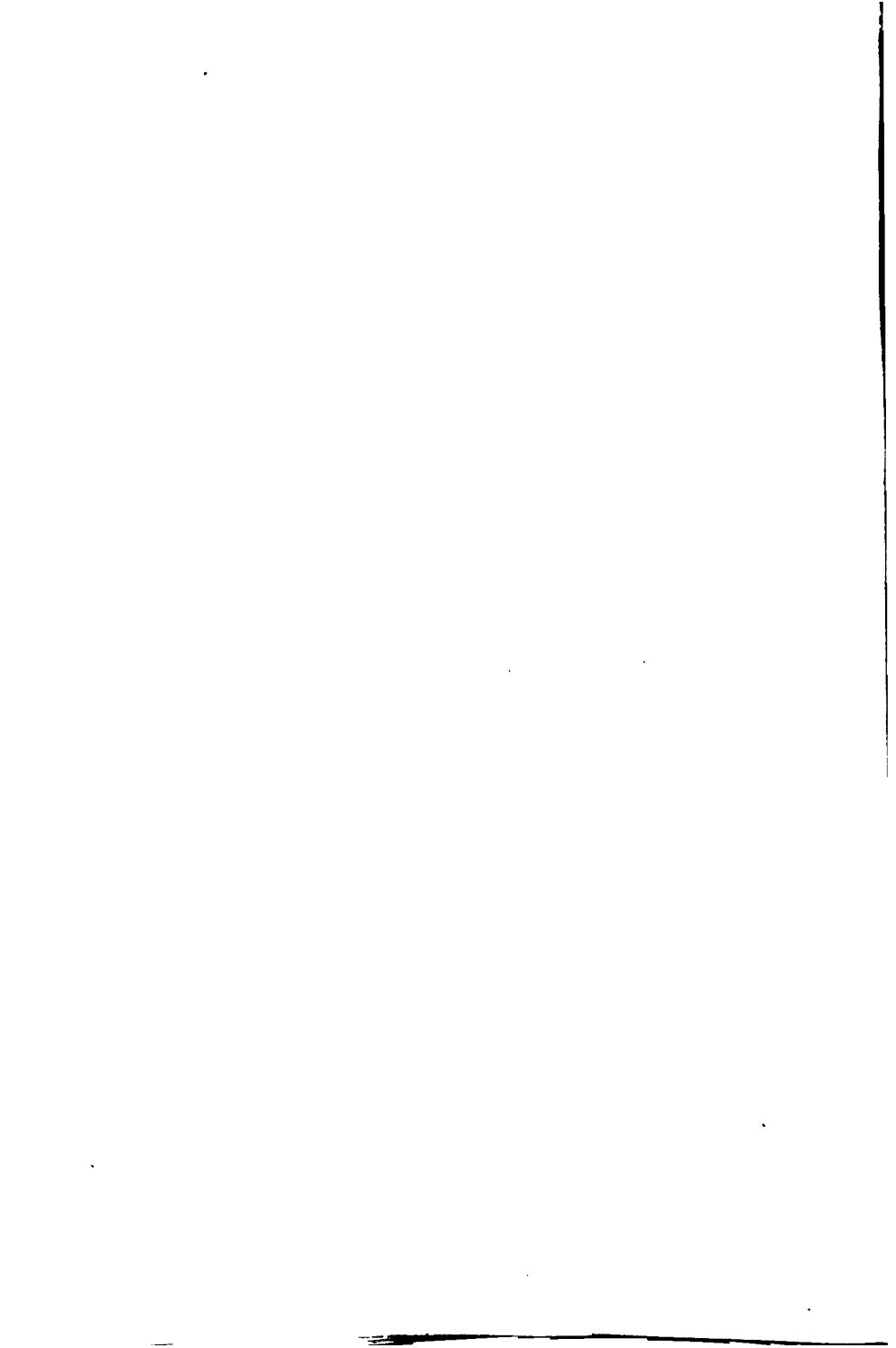
Thus Kingsley: and who can describe Bideford better? The town is very ancient—more ancient a good deal than it looks. For *By-the-Ford*—which was the old name—was given 800 years ago to Sir Richard de Grenville by his cousin the Conqueror, so that there must have been a settlement there even in Saxon days. And the

* Hume.



Alfred, Sweden, 1890

Bildeford, and the Torridge I.



Grenvilles held it till the beginning of the last century, when the estates were sold to the Cleveland family.

These Grenvilles have left their mark in Bideford. It was Sir Theobald who in the fourteenth century built the famous bridge, the foundation being pointed out by an angel, who appeared in a vision to Sir Richard Gurney, the parish priest. There are two versions of this legend. One tells how the celestial visitant came to the rescue when the work had been well-nigh given up on account of the shifting sands, and showed the priest a rock in the river-bed; the other relates that the bridge was commenced half a mile higher up the stream, and the stones were carried every night to where it now stands until the angel 'bade build the bridge where he himself had so kindly transported the materials.'*

But Bideford Bridge is not what it was. It is still 741 feet long (the length cannot be altered, though the breadth may be). The twenty-four pointed arches remain; it is still 'the very omphalos, cynosure, and soul around which the town as a body has organized itself'; but the old-world air has gone, as it needs must, when a top of modern iron lattice-work takes the place of ancient masonry. But the widening of Bideford Bridge is proof of the progress of Bideford town, so let us be content.

Then another Grenville, Sir Richard, discoverer with Raleigh of Virginia and Carolina, was Vice-Admiral of England in the stirring days of Elizabeth. He it was who off the Terceira Islands pitted the *Revenge* and her crew of 120 men—for the rest were laid low by sickness—against fifty Spanish galleons, and in four-and-twenty hours killed more than a thousand men and sunk four ships, not yielding till want of powder and his own mortal wound forced him to surrender. His last words are engraved on a brass in Bideford Church, lately put up by his descendant and cousin the rector:

* Kingsley's 'Westward Ho!'

'Here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do, fighting for country, queen, religion and honour; my soul willingly departing from this body, leaving behind the lasting fame of having behaved as every valiant soldier is in duty bound to do.'

Two days after he died, and his ship, riddled with shot, went with him to the bottom.

On the hillside above the bridge stands Chudleigh's Fort, a rampart built round the site of the fort erected by Major Chudleigh at the time of the Rebellion. This is the best place to see Bideford, for it lies right opposite, stretching up the hill across the river with its long quay below, and with a goodly line of coasters lying thereat, showing that the maritime life of the old town is not extinct yet. Here on the grassy slope we may lie and muse of Sir Amyas Leigh and Salvation Yeo, not to speak of the sweet Rose of Bideford, daughter of old Salterne, the Mayor. Or we may mount behind the rampart and look up the river to the deep winding valley, down which it flows from Wear Gifford and to Monkleigh Church, high against the sky. Or down towards Instow and Appledore, both just round the corner, where the swell of the Atlantic meets the current of the Torridge, and to the tower called Chanter's Folly on the western hill, and Braunton among its green hills across the sandy estuary of the Taw.

The old church of Bideford, dating from the fourteenth century, was, with the exception of the tower, pulled down some years since, and though a handsome Perpendicular building has arisen in its place, there is little that will interest the antiquary. But the font is, judging from its rude appearance, of an age 'whereof,' as the lawyers say, 'the memory of man runneth not to the contrary,' and there is a curious screen under the tower arch, the panels filled with grotesquely carved figures.

There are many monuments: one in alabaster to the Strange family is painted in gorgeous colours, and in the chancel lies the recumbent effigy of Sir Thomas

Graynfyld* in full armour. The date is 1513. Near it is the brass to the brave Sir Richard.

Several epitaphs in the churchyard are worth recording. The following is under the name of John Osburn, who died on January 15, 1807, aged seventy :

‘ Tho, borraus blast, and neptun,s waves,
Have toss,d me, two and fro ;
In spite of both, by God,s decree
I harbour, here below ;
Where I do now at anchor leay
With many of our fleet
Yet once again I must set sail
Our Saviour Christ to meet.’

There is nothing uncommon in the epitaph itself, which is frequently found in churchyards by the sea—at Ilfracombe the last line runs, ‘our *General* ! Christ to meet’—it is the spelling and punctuation which are so extraordinary.

Another stone close by has neither name nor date ; only this :

‘ Farewell, my dear husband,
I leave you behind
With eight dear children,
to them pray be kind ;
Two lie here with me,
mould’ring in the dust,
It cost me my life
in bearing the last.’

Opposite the north door is the tomb of Frances, wife of Richard Crockhill, who died in 1703 aged seventy-three. Her uprightness is set forth in the following verse :

‘ Shee was a shopkeeper very long,
Shee did no wrong to old or young,
Her wight & measure was very just,
& now in Heaven wth Christ shee rest.’

All round the churchyard are ranged the headstones of the graves destroyed when, for the sake of public convenience, part of the enclosure was thrown into a new

* Another spelling for Grenville. This name is written in half a dozen different ways at least.

road. Among them, opposite the south-eastern corner of the church, stands the stone erected to the memory of that eccentric Bideford character Captain Henry Clark, who died in 1836 at the age of sixty-one. Presumably, as 'poor Harry' died a pauper, the stone was given by some kind neighbour who caused to be cut upon it the following lines:

'Our worthy FRIEND who lies beneath this stone,
Was master of a vessel all his own;
House and Lands had he and GOLD in store,
He spent the whole and would if ten times more.
For twenty years he scarce slept in a BED,
Linhays and Limekilns lull'd his weary head,
Because he would not to the Poorhouse go
For his proud spirit would not let him to.
The Blackbirds whistling notes at break of Day
Used to awake him from his BED of HAY:
Unto the Bridge and Quay he then REPAIRED
To see what SHIPPING up the River steer'd.
OFT in the week he used to VIEW the Bay
To see what SHIPS were coming in from Sea;
To captains wives he brought the welcome news,
And to the relatives of all their CREWS.

'At last poor HARRY CLARK was taken ill
And carried to the workhouse 'gainst his Will;
But, being of this mortal life quite tired,
He lived about a month and then expired.'

A fifth epitaph, destroyed when the church was rebuilt, is perhaps more amusing than either of the foregoing:

'Here lies the body of Mary Sexton,
Who pleased many a man, but never vexed one—
Not like the woman who lies under the next stone.'

And Bideford Church has possessed at least two humorous Rectors. The first was Michael O'Gilby, Chaplain to Charles II., who, meeting a parishioner given to absenting himself from divine service, ventured to reprove him. The man impudently replied that he could read better sermons at home. O'Gilby retorted that he wished all his parishioners were of the same opinion as he would then have little or nothing to do. The other, John Whitfield, who became Rector in

1742, was much worried by the opposition of the Mayor, a Presbyterian apothecary. Of him he wrote :

‘ Philip of Macedon, ’tis said,
Had every morning when in bed
A page, whose salutation ran,
“ Remember, sir, you are a man !”
So, if we *small* with *great* compare,
Our present limping, looby mayor
Should every morning, night, and all,
Have C—— or Jonathan to call
(While each an ear did gently pull),
“ Remember, sir, you are a fool !” ’*

There are few sails more delightful than that from Bideford to Appledore when the tide is full. Setting sail from the quay, it is but a few minutes to Cleeve Houses, where there is a little pier or two, in days gone by busy with ship-building. Below this is Snuffy Corner, a wooded cliff which gets its unromantic name from an old sea-captain who used to walk daily from Appledore to Cleeve Houses and always paused here to survey the scenery and take a pinch of *snuff*. Hereabouts is a strip of gravelly beach, a delightful place for a dip, as I can myself testify.

Away up behind the trees in the direction of Northam is, or rather was, Burrough, where dwelt Amyas Leigh. I say *was*, for, alas ! the old house is no more, having been lately pulled down. The Bideford photographers, however, still trade upon its memory, and you may see its ‘counterfeit presentment’ in more than one shop-window in the High Street.

Across the glancing river, rising from the meadows along which runs the railway to Barnstaple, is the beautiful domain of Tapeley Park, crowned by a pillar to the memory of one of the family who met his death by drowning. Separated from it by a wooded combe is the pretty village of Westleigh, its church tower almost

* Watkins’ ‘History of Bideford.’

opposite to Chanter's Folly, which crests the hill above Appledore. And there is Instow, too, its villas and cottages white against the green slopes behind, with a rough little quay which for most of the day is high and dry.

And as our boat rounds the point there is Appledore, to reach which we must pass an odd-looking building painted a staring white, which looks at first sight like anything but what it really is—a house. Here lives an old salt who, from motives economical, has constructed for himself an abode out of deck-houses placed, apparently, one on the top of the other.

Appledore is as ancient as Bideford, and its antiquity is more apparent. From the quay it climbs the side of the hill towards a grove of trees from which there is a fine view of the meeting of Torridge with Taw. The streets, which abound with the usual waterside smells, are pitched with 'cobbles,' and some of them are so narrow that you may almost shake hands with your neighbour opposite.

Appledore, though a small port, is a busy one. Here larger ships lie than at Bideford, and vessels of considerable tonnage can come beside the quays for repairs. There was some talk of excavating a dry-dock between it and Cleeve Houses, but the project, owing to the death of the principal projector, is at present in abeyance. Nevertheless, the shipbuilding trade flourishes.

It was near Appledore that the Danish chieftain Hubba is said to have landed and laid siege to the earthwork of Kenwith Castle. Where Kenwith Castle was seems uncertain, but some think that Henny Castle at Henni-borough, in the parish of Abbotsham, was the spot. Be that as it may, the Danes were defeated with great slaughter, their magic Raven taken, and Hubba slain. Bloody Corner, a field on the roadside near Northam, is still pointed out as the place where they made a stand

while retreating to their ships, and where Biorn Ironside, Hubba's companion, was killed. Hubba was buried in a cairn on the shore, and the spot is to this day called Hubblestone, though the chieftain's tomb has long since been washed away.

Above Appledore is Northam, a large village from which you look down upon level marshes and the sand-hills of Northam Burrows, which are protected from the encroachments of the sea by the Pebble Ridge, a long bank of pebbles and boulders against which in stormy weather the Atlantic breaks with a voice of thunder, mingling with which is the rattle and grinding of the stones as the receding waves drag them down the bank. And at the western end of the ridge, and up the slopes behind, lies Westward Ho, a rising watering-place, but withal 'a tedious place visited by those who know no better.' Indeed, there seems little to do there but play eternal golf and bathe—when the ocean will let you. Outside, at low-water, the brown line of Bideford Bar stretches across the mouth of the estuary, overlooked by the lighthouse at the western end of the Branton Burrows. And so Torridge enters the sea.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TAW.

Instow—The Taw Estuary—Fremington—Coddon Hill—Barnstaple Bridge—Tom Faggus—Barnstaple—Pilton Priory—Sir Bouchier Wrey and the Embankment—Tawstock—Bishops Tawton—Atherington Church—The Mole—Chulmleigh—Rashleigh Barton—Eggesford—A Gorgeous Monument—North Tawton—Cottle's Barton—The Pool on Bath Barton—North Week—South Tawton Church—Sticklepath—Belstone—Taw Marsh—Taw Head.

It is not necessary to return to Bideford Bridge in order to reach the mouth of the Taw. On Appledore quay there are always plenty of sailors hanging about ready and willing to ferry you across for a small consideration. But it is to be hoped that the time will not be dead low-water. For then Instow is divided from the Torridge by a wide tract of sand, dry enough below the sea-wall, but sloppy to a degree down by the river.

Instow looks much better from the Torridge than it does on a nearer approach. It is a mixture of old and new, and the modern villas do not harmonize at all with the ancient cottages. There is an untidy look, too, about the sea-front, where the sand blown from the beach and the sandhills is allowed to encroach upon the road until it sometimes stretches from one side to the other. But for all that it is a pleasant place and a healthy one, for is it not open to the breezes of the Atlantic, those breezes that brace the nerves and sharpen the appetite better than all the tonics in the world? And has it not a fair pros-

pect, too, of the green hills across the river, of the river itself, when the tide is in dotted with the rich brown sails of the coasters, and of Appledore climbing the slope right over against it ?

It is beyond the church set on the hill, to the north of the village, that we first really overlook the estuary of the Taw—an estuary nearly as wide again as that of the Torridge, but not as interesting. For here there are no picturesque river-ports, no shipping lying along the quayside, except at Fremington, where there is a little dock ; the mallet of the shipwright is unheard, and the cheerful sound of iron ringing on iron is never borne upward on the breeze as upon the sister stream. These lower waters of the Taw are almost deserted, and one need not seek far for the cause. Visit them when the tide is out, and you will find a waste of tawny sand through which the river meanders in an uncertain shallow stream, only navigable by the boat of the fisherman.

The southern bank is fringed by flat meadowland, along which runs the railway parallel with the road to Barnstaple. From this road, which we shall now follow, richly cultivated slopes rise to the sky-line, commanding, of course, very wide views over the river—at the flood a noble expanse of water—to the hills opposite, where rises the old church of Heanton Punchardon, the cottages of Ashford, and, further away, the straggling village of Braunton.

In less than three miles we reach Fremington. To get into the cool, shady churchyard, or to rest awhile under the lych-gate, will be a welcome relief from the hot dusty road. The porch has a waggon roof with oaken ribs, finished at the wall-plate with rudely-cut figures of angels, and on the wall *outside*—a position somewhat unusual—is placed the stoup for holy water.

Soon after passing the next hamlet—Bickington—the road reaches high ground, and Barnstaple comes into view,

pretty nearly filling up the valley, for it is far and away the largest town in North Devon. At this distance only two buildings are specially conspicuous, the tower of Holy Trinity, and the crooked spire of the parish church of St. Peter and St. Paul. Far away to the right rises the loftiest land this side the Hangman, the piece of moorland called Coddon Hill, bearing both in name and appearance a strong resemblance to the loftier hill of Cosdon on Dartmoor, more than twenty miles away.

As at Bideford, the principal feature of the 'commercial capital of North Devon' is the bridge, which, though it does not look it, is older even than that spanning the Torridge, claiming to date from the thirteenth century. It, too, has been widened, and has lost in the process much of its ancient appearance. Although closely resembling the 'omphalos, cynosure and soul' of Bideford, it is only two-thirds its length, for Barnstaple is eight miles up the Taw and sixteen arches were found sufficient to span the river. According to Prince,* 'Tradition declares that it was begun by two maiden sisters who by spinning and teaching young children their skill builded the first piers.' In the reign of Henry VIII. it appears to have been in a poor state of repair, and 'a gentle dirge and masse solemnly songe' was offered as a reward to those who would give moneys to the structure spanning the 'great hugy, mighty, perylous and dreadful water' of the Taw. Whatever it was in the sixteenth century, this maligned river is not terror-inspiring now, and, save when once or twice in winter a freshet comes down from off Dartmoor, is placid enough.

It was from Barnstaple Bridge that that notable outlaw Tom Faggus leapt his horse into the river when he found the narrow way blocked by the peace officers. Tom Faggus (whose real name was Fergus) was a native of South Molton, and originally a blacksmith. Ruined by a

* 'Worthies of Devon.'

lawsuit with Sir Richard Bampfylde he turned highwayman, and for many years, thanks to the speed and almost human cunning of his 'strawberry' mare, escaped justice. Among his many exploits, one of the most amusing is the trick he played on a party of farmers and others who lay in wait for him at Exford. He rode up so disguised that not one of them recognised him, and on being told what was their object joined in their vituperation of himself, and volunteered to assist in the capture. But, as their powder might be damp from exposure to the moorland air, he suggested that they should first draw the charge and reload. The simple yeomen took his advice, with the natural result: before they could reload he had covered them with his pistols and proceeded to rob them at his leisure. Upon another occasion he surprised a party riding together—for security against himself—from Barnstaple Fair, and had emptied their pockets before they had recovered the confusion into which they had been thrown by his sudden attack.

Once he was very nearly captured at Porlock. The house was surrounded by the whole population, armed with anything they could lay hands upon, from flintlocks to scythes. 'Faggus is taken!' they roared, but, leaping on his mare, he charged the whole posse and got clear away. Upon another occasion, at the inn at Simonsbath, he was actually seized, but whistling to his mare, she rushed from the stable and so laid about her with heels and teeth that his captors, to save themselves, relinquished their grasp, and once more he escaped. But at last Faggus met the fate of the pitcher that goes too often to the well, and, sad to relate, he came to his end owing to an act of kindness on his part. While resting at the inn at Exbridge a poor woman entered, and Faggus, moved with compassion, ordered her food and drink. On a given signal the woman—a constable in disguise—pulled the chair from under him, and others who lay in hiding

rushed forward. He whistled for the mare, but in vain. Simultaneously with the attack she had been shot in the stable. He was hung at Taunton, a victim to his own good-nature, for, however merciless to the rich, he was ever kind to the poor, and, like more famous Robin Hood, never failed to relieve their necessities.

From the bridge you will see far down the estuary, and can if you like walk along the side of it for some distance by the path winding by its side. Near this path, close to Barnstaple Quay Station, is a low building faced by a colonnade on the top of which stands a statue of 'good Queen Anne.' It was built for an exchange near two hundred years ago.

But Barnstaple town itself might have been built almost within recent years, so few traces are there of antiquity, so many of modern enterprise. Yet it is undoubtedly ancient, and seems to have been a borough even in Saxon times, honoured by the presence of Athelstan, who is said to have repaired the walls.* Afterwards it passed to the powerful Judhael de Totnais, who built a castle here, whereof no vestiges remain, and a priory which has vanished too. The oldest building now in the town is undoubtedly St. Ann's Chapel, of which the undercroft is supposed by some to date from before the Conquest. Here Barum folk worshipped before the church was built, and here Barum boys are now educated.

Adjoining it is the parish church, a handsome building of which the Decorated chancel is as old as the fourteenth century. But it is chiefly remarkable for its crooked spire and for the unusual number of seventeenth-century monuments—nearly all to Barnstaple worthies—which cover the walls.

In the suburb of Pilton is the priory church, a fine old Perpendicular building with traces of earlier work. On the pulpit is the stand for the hour-glass whereby in days

* Murray.

gone by the preacher measured the length of his discourse, and there is an interesting screen, while in the chancel may be seen the hideous monument to the Chichester family—kneeling figures in black vestments.

Pilton is divided from Barnstaple by a brook which is, for part of its course, tidal.* The bridge over it was built in the time of Edward III. by one Sir John Stowford, who, coming from his house at West Down into Barnstaple, found a woman and child who had been drowned in attempting to ford the stream.† 'Wherefore, being "moved with compassion," the good judge was inclined to erect a bridge here for the security of travellers.'

Like Bideford, Barnstaple has a coasting trade, but no vessels of any great burthen can come up to the quays, owing to the shallowness of the water. There are several exports; but the most interesting is the Barum ware, for which the fine clay of the neighbourhood is peculiarly adapted. This handsome ware, which is richly coloured and highly glazed by a process which, I fancy, the manufacturers keep secret, is every year becoming better known and appreciated, and were it not for the price, which is rather prohibitory, would run the terra-cotta of Torquay hard.

By the western bank of the river there is a path to Tawstock Court, the seat of the Wreys. It was a Sir Bouchier Wrey who, a hundred years ago, set the men of his regiment to make the embankment along the river-side, thereby incurring the wrath of Barnstaple Corporation, who grumbled, I suppose, at the work being done by outsiders. Anyhow, the War Office heard of it, and wrote asking Sir Bouchier for an explanation. He replied that he was teaching his men practical engineering, and nothing more was heard of the matter. And so the lands

* These little streams are known in the counties bordering on the Bristol Channel as *pills*; hence the name Pill-ton.

† Mrs. Whitcombe's 'Bygone Days.'

of Tawstock were protected against the river at little, if any, expense to their owner; and the 'engineering' was certainly 'practical,' for the bank stands solid to this day.

In the park, which is a lovely domain sloping steep to the river, with some fine and very ancient timber, stands the cruciform church, the most interesting, perhaps, in the district. It is for the most part in the Decorated style, and the nave is divided from the chancel by a screen. To the south side of the chancel has been added a Perpendicular chapel with a good oak roof, and in this chapel are the tombs of the Bouchiers, Earls of Bath, all of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Near it is a gateway built in 1574, and the only relic of the old house.

On the slope above the meadows across the river—meadows where the cattle stand knee-deep in the lush grass—rises the sister church of Bishop's Tawton, the short tower surmounted by a crocketed spire. Here, dividing the belfry from the nave, is a beautiful Perpendicular screen richly painted and gilded, and nearly every window is filled with stained glass. On the south side of the churchyard stand the remains of the palace to which Bishop's Tawton owns its name—once an occasional residence of the Bishops of Exeter.

The Taw is not navigable much beyond Bishop's Tawton, and at New Bridge, a mile or so further up the river, is innocent of salt water altogether. At New Bridge we may as well take to the road and follow the river through the fertile valley up to Umberleigh Bridge, an unpicturesque structure where black posts and railings take the place of stone parapets. For some time before reaching it, we shall have noticed on the hill-top above a lofty tower with stair-turret rising well over the battlements. This is the tower of Atherington Church, which, though to reach it we shall have a long pull up hill, is well worth seeing.

For this church possesses the finest rood-screen in Devonshire. It is also said to be the oldest, but this can hardly be the case, as it is Perpendicular, and there are churches, I believe, though I cannot name them, that have screens of an earlier period. Rather oddly, it cuts off the eastern end of the south aisle, instead of the chancel, which, however, is divided from the nave by another screen also ancient, but of a design far less elaborate. This wonderful screen is of the most delicate workmanship, and everywhere richly carved, even the divisions in the fans being filled with cherubs, medallions, and other designs, while the fans themselves spring from angels bearing shields. Graceful, however, as is the lower part, the rood-loft is even finer, the projecting canopies being almost as fine as if worked with a fret-saw. Unfortunately, the panels are defaced with a faded daub of the royal arms, divers shields, and a half-obliterated inscription.

As we descend we get a good view of the valley below, and especially of the wooded slopes of a combe on the opposite side. This valley of the Taw bears some resemblance to that of the Exe between Bampton and Tiverton, described in the second chapter: green meadows in the bottom, slopes, more or less wooded, to the right and left, and, running side by side with the river the almost inevitable railway.

Three miles above Umberleigh Bridge, the hitherto rather open valley deepens, and the best scenery on the upper waters of our river is reached. Here are lofty hills covered with timber to the sky-line, between which the river, a wide but generally shallow current, glides rapidly seaward. Passing the Portsmouth Arms Inn and railway-station, we see up a combe across the water the little river Mole, a fine stream for trout, which gives its name to the towns of North and South Molton, and 'establishes the only physical connection between

Exmoor and Dartmoor.* Just above it is a bridge, which we cross, and take the road to Chulmleigh, where we shall be glad to lay our heads for the night.

Chulmleigh, one of the highest-pitched towns in Devonshire, is a good way up from the river, and seems further than it really is, as the road† for some distance keeps to the valley before turning up the long steep hill to the town. But, higher on the river, it looks near enough, with the tall tower of the church standing plainly out against the sky.

It is a queer and rather dismal little place of about 1,000 inhabitants, with a short main street, without pavements, but pitched from wall to wall, and one or two tortuous by-lanes. One of these leads to the church, the largest and finest Perpendicular church in Mid Devon, which will seat some 1,500 people. It used to be collegiate, with seven prebends, and once upon a time, according to Westcote, the seven prebends were seven brothers. He tells us that a poor Chulmleigh man, having children more quickly than he liked, went away for seven years. A year after his return, his wife presented him with 'seven male children at one byrth, whiche made the poore man think himself utterly undone (and no wonder), and, thereby despairing, put them into a baskett, and hasteth to the river with intent to drowne.' He was met, however, by 'the lady of the land,' who inquired what he had in the basket, and on his replying 'whelps,' desired to see them, purposing to choose one. He dared not decline, and the (intended) murder was out. This good lady had the children brought up, and ultimately 'provided a prebendship for every one of them in this parishe.'

As Westcote himself says of another of his tales, 'It

* Ward, p. 17.

† Close to this road, on the left, is Colleton Barton, a Jacobean house where there is some good carving.

is your choice whether to believe this story or not,' but whatever you may think of the 'seven prebends,' you must acknowledge that the people of Chulmleigh have a noble church in which to worship. It is long and cool and lofty, and it is a relief to let the eye rest on pillars which for the nonce are neither gray granite nor yellow sandstone, but the ruddy stone of North Molton. Right across the building stretches a large and fine screen; the bench-ends are carved, and there is an embattled porch. On the tower once more we see the crocketed pinnacles which for a season have ceased to be a feature on every other hilltop.

Chulmleigh was at one time during the Rebellion occupied by Goring, as unprincipled a debauchee as ever stepped, who first served the Parliament, and then went over to the King. The following 'requisition,' dated Chulmleigh, December 25, 1645, shows what manner of man this turncoat was: 'To the Constable of Withbridge these. By G——, if thou send me not a horse or money to buy one, G—— d—— me I will come with my unsanctified troops, which shall not leave one stone upon another.' What a pleasant Christmas greeting!

Let us get down to the valley again. Just above where the brook called the Little Dart swells its waters, the Taw is weired, and in summer-time one may cross dryshod, and pay a visit to the old mansion of Rashleigh above the cornfield on the western bank. Here, in the lower rooms, are some fine ceilings and carved panels, but the handsomest chamber is a bedroom reached by an old oak staircase. It has a concave ceiling, very richly relieved with horses, birds, and foliage, and with three large bosses or pendants down the middle. A ceiling in the principal room downstairs has similar treatment, and in addition the armorial bearings of the Clatworthys, the first owners of the place. The property came to the Rash-

leighs by marriage, and by them it was held till, on failure of issue, it passed into other hands. It now belongs to the Tremaynes.

The house stands high, and is surrounded by fine elms. Right opposite, on the hilltop, is Chulmleigh, and to the left the eye can follow the windings of the valley till a big bend near the Portsmouth Arms cuts off further view.

And now we reach Eggesford, where Taw again almost loses himself amid lofty wooded hills, and the scenery is lovely. Looking down upon the river is Eggesford House, a Tudoresque mansion, half covered in creepers, built about seventy years ago. The old house, of which no vestige remains, stood lower down, near the church, to which, crossing the substantial stone bridge, we will wend our way. This is a pretty and, needless to add, well-kept little building; but there is nothing particular about the architecture, the principal feature being a really magnificent monument erected in 1650 by Arthur, Lord Chichester, to the memory of his two wives, which fills the whole space from floor to wall-plate between the two windows of the nave. His lordship is represented life-size, standing erect in full armour, holding a truncheon, and with his coronet gilded—a truly regal-looking figure. On either hand recline the effigies of his wives, the one on the right having at her side the body of a stillborn child, buried with her. Below her are the rest of her progeny, seven comical little figures standing in a row. Both ladies are in full dress, parts of which are picked out with gold. The stone for all the statues is of finest alabaster, and of the same stone is the arch of the recess, decorated with representations of armour, trophies, and highly-coloured escutcheons. The whole makes up the most costly and elaborate monument I know.

Of course, there are inscriptions, and equally, of course, they are highly laudatory. For instance, the 'Reader' is

told, in poetry, of one wife that 'her full dimensions' were

'So angelicall,
And rarely good that virtue might repine
In wanting stuffe to make one more divine;'

and of the other, that she was

'The mirror of her sex, whose praise
Asks not a garland but a *grove of Bayes* !'

And so on. As one reads the fulsome eulogies on these monuments, the words of Gray's 'Elegy' come to mind :

' Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death ?'

But the best comment I ever heard of in connection with the absolute rubbish cut on so many tombstones was that of a little child. After studying the epitaphs for some time, she asked : ' Mother, where are all the *wicked* people buried ?' Where indeed ?

In another recess in the chancel are the alabaster effigies of Lord Chichester's parents, and near it a heavy-looking and severe monument dated 1723, consisting of a coffer of dark marble on a block of white under a deep arched recess, has a Latin inscription in honour of William Fellowes, a man of some learning, and, like the others, of the family of Lord Portsmouth.

In the churchyard is the upper half of an old granite cross of the type found about Dartmoor and its borders. Probably it was brought from the wayside, or perhaps rescued from desecration as a gatepost, but of its history the sexton could tell me nothing.

Three miles above Eggesford, where at last the railway leaves it, the river makes a sudden turn, coming to meet us from the south-west instead of from the south-east, and presently makes yet another, this time descending from

the north-west. But soon it resumes a north-easterly course to which it sticks pretty well all the way from its springs on Dartmoor, now again drawing near.

Passing under the village of Nymet Rowland, which is up over the hill, and Brushford, with its white house and church among the trees, we reach Taw Bridge, where a single arch spans the dwindling river, and see at the head of a side valley, nearly four miles away, the village of Winkleigh, which has a beautiful church, but too far from the river to visit. And so on past Bondleigh to North Tawton, which stands high above the river on the eastern side of the valley.

North Tawton is a dull little town with a church which has been spoilt in restoration and filled with 'horse-boxes.' The dumpy tower is crowned by an ugly spire of shingles. Indeed, the only interesting building in the place is an old house with carved mullions to one of its windows, and a Perpendicular doorway. Over the window is the date 1689, but some of the building is obviously of earlier date.

Between the town and the railway—the main line of the South-Western from Exeter to Plymouth—is a very picturesque old house long and low, with roof of thatch, embowered in roses and greenery. This is Cottle's Barton, formerly the residence of the Cottle family. The date over the deep porch, with its inner door of massive oak, is 1567. The drawing-room has a handsome plaster ceiling, and is panelled with painted oak, and there is a mantelpiece with classical figures. Ascending by stairs formed of solid blocks of oak, we reach an upper chamber with a concave ceiling, somewhat similar to that at Rashleigh, but not so ornate. In this is a plaster overmantel with the Cottle arms and the date 1599. A good deal of oak wainscoting, too decayed to be used, is stored in a loft. In the kitchen is a fine oak dresser, and in the hall an oak chest.

This interesting old house is again changing hands, and under very sad circumstances. For more than a hundred years it has been in the possession of the Salters, and the last of the family, as genial a yeoman as any in the county, has recently met his death from blood-poisoning, the result of a trifling accident in one of his own fields.

Near Cottle's Barton is an ugly square house, the farm buildings of which occupy the site of the old house of the De Baths or Bathons. On the estate is a pit long looked upon by the country folk as having properties little short of miraculous. For this pit, though commonly dry, would suddenly fill with water, not only before the death of a member of the family, but also prior to that of any person of note or the occurrence of a public calamity. The last time the waters rose was just before the death of the Duke of Wellington. Now rude science has knocked all these pretty fancies on the head, and discovered—as anyone but a West-Country rustic would have done long since—that the magic pit is fed by an intermittent spring.

Within view of the house, the Taw is spanned by a stone railway viaduct, which, though anything but a lovely piece of architecture, gives a very fine view of Dartmoor. There is Cosdon Beacon, looking from this point far more shapely than usual; to the right the rugged crest of Belstone; further west again the mountain of Yes Tor. Down the valley at our feet rushes the Taw, foaming over a tall weir erected for the purpose of supplying the leat which feeds the mills near Cottle's Barton. You can trace its course nearly to the foot of the moor—a course marked by oak coppice and thicket—from which rises a country undulating and rather bare—certainly far less fertile than the soft vale we have left behind.

A lane running reasonably near the left bank takes us on to a high-pitched arch over the rapid waters, which we cross and reach another ancient house, North Week, once the home of the family whose name it bears, though no

longer in its pristine glory. For it is not only a farm, but has been divided, and two families now reside beneath the old roof-tree. And this seems odd, particularly when we learn that the larger portion is the freehold of the farmer who resides therein, while the remainder is the property of a gentleman who has let it to a labourer. The freeholder's explanation, that 'it had been in Chancery,' seemed to him to account sufficiently for this peculiar arrangement, though it leaves the ordinary individual in darkness as profound as that of Chancery itself.

There are a good many traces of former greatness still remaining, though from its high estate the old house has fallen wofully. The gatehouse, with apartments on both sides, and a chapel—now, alas! a barn—overhead, still remains strong in its sturdy granite arches, over the outer of which is a little panel sculptured with the royal arms, put up to commemorate the visit of King Charles (whether first or second our farmer does not know).^{*} And there are ornamental plaster ceilings in the principal rooms, and one or two Tudor doorways showing traces of carving. But the Tudor architecture is only skin-deep. For I am told that the house was built in the twelfth century by Roger de Week, 'who came over with the Conqueror,' and that the outer wall is built outside an inner one, the space between being filled with rubble masonry. No road now leads to the gatehouse; in fact, as the Irishman said, 'the back of the house is the front,' and a very inaccessible front it is, approached by a farm-yard cart-track as 'mucky' as any this side of Okehampton.

Onward for another three miles, with Cosdon becoming more and more shapeless as we draw near his feet, and the plain but graceful tower of South Tawton Church rises above the hill and casts its shadow

^{*} It must be Charles I., who visited Okehampton in 1643.

over the poor-looking little village beneath. This church is the handsomest about the northern spurs of Dartmoor. In this land of rough-hewn churches, the elegant arcades of white Beer stone, contrasting with the local stone and gray granite, have an effect very striking, though where mixed with the granite in the debased arches of the chancel the stone consorts ill enough. Both nave and aisles have good oak roofs, that of the former ornamented at the springing of each rib with half-figures of seraphs, representing the angelic choir. In the hands of most are instruments of music, one scraping a fiddle, another performing on the mandoline (!), while a few engage in prayer. These figures, though new, are, I understand, replicas of older carving.

The oaken pulpit dates from Jacobean days. The panels are inlaid with the arms of the diocese and boxwood figures of the four Evangelists — that of St. John illustrating the legend of the poisoned chalice. Under the tower arch the remains of the rood-screen are inserted in a modern specimen, and a few carved bench-ends survive the zeal of the churchwarden. The granite font is modern; its predecessor, standing in the vicarage garden, is very rude indeed, so rude that the Vicar thinks it may be Saxon.

At the east end of the north aisle, where was formerly the Week Chapel, the mailed figure of Roger (or Richard) Week lies under a low canopy of Beer stone. The only inscription is a date—1595—in raised lettering. On the wall of the south aisle is a curious tablet to the Burgoyne family; at the top statuettes representing a kneeling male and female figure, and beneath, cut in outline on a small piece of marble, divers little figures, I presume representing their progeny. And there are, of course, monuments to the Oxenhams, an ancient family long resident in this parish, and of whose strange banshee

legend I shall say but a few words, having treated of it at greater length elsewhere.*

For the last 300 years, and for aught I know long before that, the death of certain of these Oxenhams has been heralded by the appearance of a bird with a white breast, which comes to the window, and even in one well-authenticated modern case entered the room. Even in this matter-of-fact nineteenth century it refuses to give up its ghostly visits, and two instances are on record in which those who saw it had never even heard of the family legend. The last appearance was in 1873, when it took up its quarters on a tree opposite the bedroom of an Oxenham who lay dying at a house in Cromwell Road, Kensington, and from this it would not move even when some masons engaged upon a house opposite threw their caps at it.†

In a valley below the village are some abandoned quarries, now filled with water. The refuse-heaps overgrown with vegetation, the encircling trees mirrored in the deep clear water, above the church tower rising over the foliage, and the massive form of Cosdon behind, form a picture which has supplied one artist, and possibly more, with a subject.

Winding over the hill, we come upon the village of Sticklepath, lying at the very foot of the moor. At the back of the cottages the Taw, here crossed by his last bridge, comes down a deep moorland valley; above it, on the mountain-side, is the wood known as 'Sticklepath hooders.' It is a pleasant sunny spot; in the spring a favourite haunt of the angler, and later in the year full of visitors who have come to enjoy the wild scenery and bracing air of Dartmoor. At the upper end of the long street, where the road rises towards Okehampton, is a

* *Vide* 'An Exploration of Dartmoor and its Antiquities.'

† *Vide* Mr. Cotton's paper, 'The Oxenham Omen,' *Trans. Dev. Assoc.*, vol. xiii.

granite pillar, rudely sculptured with crosses and other ornaments. Its history and date are alike unknown. Immediately beneath is an old fountain, known as the Lady Well. Over the cavity a stone bears the words 'Drink and be thankful.'

And now the scenery verges on grandeur, and many will envy the owner of Rockside, that modern house perched high on the slope, the splendid view of the glen and the mountainous-looking tors of Belstone more than sixteen hundred feet high. Belstone village, which lies under these tors, is a true type of the moorland hamlet—thatch and whitewash, granite wall and turfy common dotted with geese. There is a sturdy little church, with rude octagonal pillars, dating from the fifteenth century, the inevitable meeting-house, and a humble inn kept by one John Reddaway, a cheery fellow, who will give you plenty of information about the neighbourhood, for, like Sam Weller's knowledge of London, John Reddaway's knowledge of this part of Dartmoor is 'extensive and peculiar.'

A cart-track leads out on to the extensive *clatter* of the tors, and from this we get to the river again at the head of a narrow defile strewn with boulders, down which in winter the Taw plunges with an angry roar. The steep banks opposite—the first swell of Cosdon—are covered with the whortleberry plant, which pleasantly relieves the gray masses of moorstone, and below a few larches manage to support existence under the lee of a slope. Half a mile further up a magnificent prospect opens out—in my opinion the finest view on Dartmoor. At the head of a marshy vale, known as Taw Marsh, rises the conical form of Steeperton Tor, flanked on the left by the rugged rocks of far-away Wild Tor, on the right by a desolate wave of moorland, one of the hills near mysterious Cranmere. Nearer is the ridge crowned by the piles of Ock Tor, curiously weathered, and looking on a nearer

approach like piles of sandwiches, while at our feet the ground is broken on one side the river by boulders half embedded in turf, on the other by a series of little heathery promontories, and the heaps cast up by the tin-miners of long ago, now completely overgrown. It was hereabouts that Henry Kingsley in 'Geoffrey Hamlyn' makes the ruffian, George Hawker, attempt the murder of Lee.

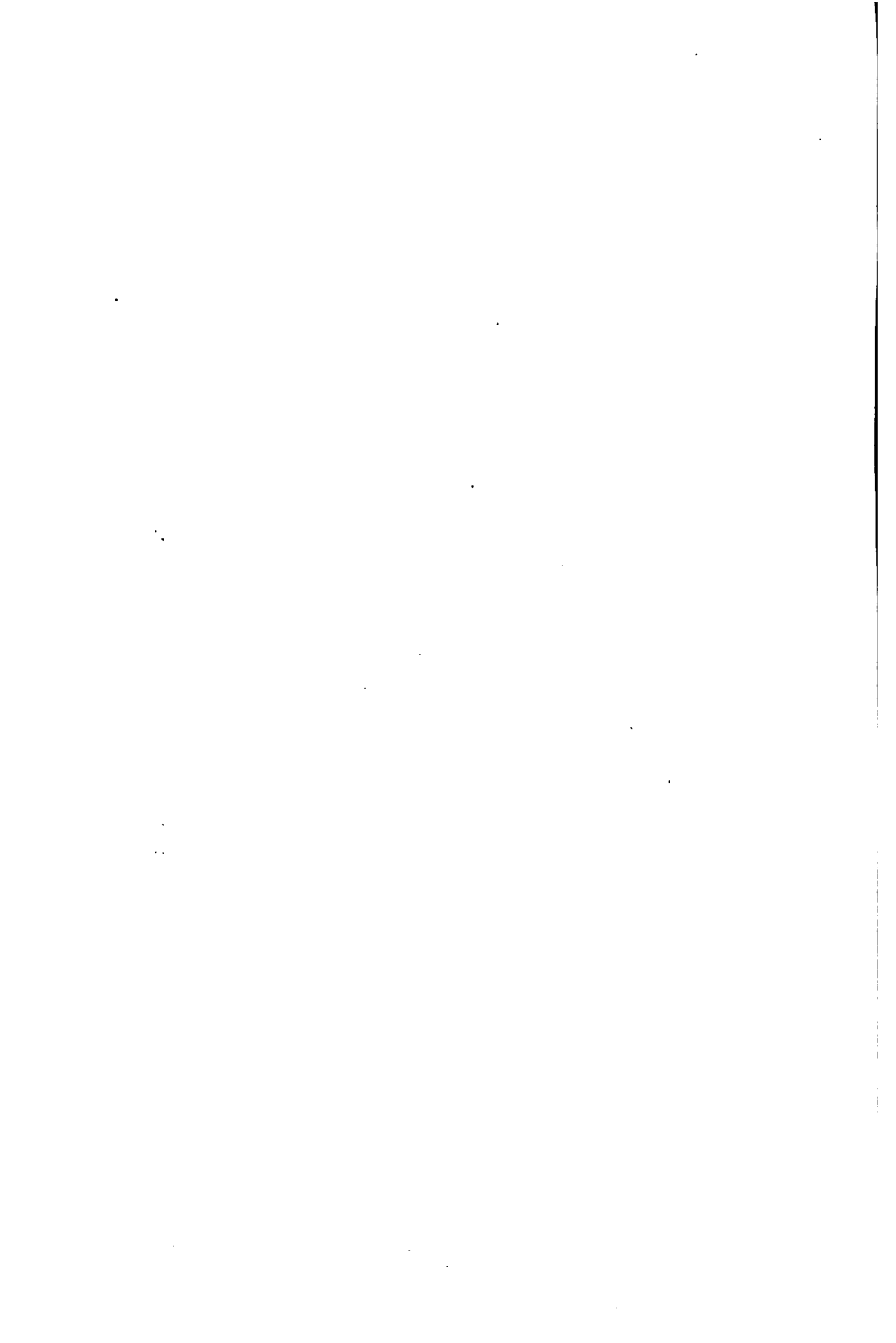
Until the foot of Steeperton is reached it will be well to keep either along the base of the Ock Tor ridge or along the foot of Cosdon, for the name Taw Marsh is no misnomer. The latter route is the more interesting, as there are here and there traces of hut-circles and pounds, where, perhaps centuries ago, lived those seekers for tin who have so industriously worked not only the banks of the Taw, but those of the tributary stream that descends the valley to the left of Steeperton. This stream is in places confined between granite walls—very much as is the Dart between Broad Marsh and Sandy Hole—but the traveller must look closely to find them beneath the clumps of whortleberry and heather which everywhere overhang the banks.

On the other side of the Tor the river foams down a gorge. The descent is abrupt, and the river is in fact a cataract, leaping in a succession of low cascades down to the vale beneath. As we turn and look back, we see, framed in by the sides of this wild ravine, Cosdon rearing its great mass against the sky.

At the head are the ruins of a bridge, built, I believe, in connection with the abandoned mine above. A year or two ago this bridge was standing, and looked as though the storms of centuries would beat upon it in vain. I well remember—and have more than once crossed—the rude little structure, with its two square openings, and little did I think that its end was near. But one day a flood swept down the valley, the Taw flung itself in fury against the unmorticed masonry, and with a crash



THE TAW ON DARTMOOR. DRAWN BY A. ANSTED.



it collapsed; while the river, now only obstructed by boulders, which no flood can stir, rushed roaring down the pass.

We are now—and for the last time—once more in the heart of the wilderness. Not a tree, not a shrub, is in sight; neither house nor cottage can be seen; man is not; everywhere reigns a vast silence; everywhere rise the great undulations of the moorland. In front a heathery valley winds upward to the great watershed, where Teign and Dart and Tavy and Ockment have their springs, where also Taw is born, and whence he comes to meet us an infant, but a lusty one.

Up and up, we pass now through a valley, now through a marshy amphitheatre, where the stream is marked by a line of rushes, until a narrow goyal, or little gorge, is reached behind Hangingstone* and Ockment hills. This is the cradle of the Taw.

Slowly we clamber up the hollow—a desolate spot, where even the wind passes overhead, and nothing is heard save the feeble trickle of the river. Suddenly even that ceases, and we pause by a tiny waterhole; this is the source. Above, a dreamy ridge of bog divides the Taw from the Dart, on each side hills of almost equal sponginess close in on the gorge—hills where the foot of man seldom falls, which the wary cattle avoid, which even the birds seem to shun. Only over the desolate moors down-stream rise the heads of Steeperton and Belstone—seeming in this forsaken spot almost like companions.

* Commonly, but erroneously, called Newlake. The 'hanging stone' is a slab of granite projecting over a block on the western side of the hill.

CHAPTER XVII

THE LYN.

Lynmouth—Lynton—The road between—Glen Lyn—Lyn Cleave—Chiselton Combe—The Foreland—Glenthorne—Watersmeet—Long Pool—Millslade—Malmsmead Bridge and the Badgworthy Water—Lorna's Bower—The 'Waterslide'—Doone Valley—Oare—Oareford—The Chalk Water—Robbers' Bridge—Lyn Head.

'Down from her mountain-lair careered the Lyn.'—STRONG.

AT Taw Head we are far indeed from our next and last river. Still, we must get to it somehow. As Westcote says, 'the law and necessity of our journey and talk exacteth no less.' We will, therefore, retrace our steps to Belstone, and thence descend upon Okehampton Station, and for the nonce take the much-abused train to Barnstaple and Ilfracombe. From between Lapford and Eggesford, right away to the salt water, the line runs parallel with the river, so that we shall get many a flying glimpse—though from an opposite direction—of our route of the last few days. From Ilfracombe, where the railway ends, we shall have a delightful drive by coach to Lynton and Lynmouth; and here, again, we cannot but regret that our time is too short to explore the beauties of the wonderful coast-line that lies between Helesborough and the Foreland. Perhaps, however, we may visit it in the time to come.*

* See 'The Coasts of Devon and Cornwall,' now in preparation.

'The finest spot, save Cintra and the Arrabida, I ever saw.' So writes a late Poet Laureate.

Whether people who have travelled further afield than Robert Southey would speak of Lynmouth in terms so warm as he has done, I cannot say. As for Cintra and the Arrabida, I myself know them not—I am afraid by my own fault, as I played my last cricket match but a few miles from the former, on a very hot and dusty common, by the side of the highway leading thither from Lisbon—another instance, perhaps, of a want of Ruskinism. But that the ravines of the Lyns are the finest in the West Country, I am quite prepared to assert, and that against all comers.

Lynmouth lies at the foot of a precipitous hill, its cottages, old and new, its hotels and lodging houses, pressing the Lyn so close that those on one side of the street are actually washed by the river. To the east rises another hill or ridge crested with piles of rock—the Tors, with a big hotel and a house or two perched somehow among the foliage high above your head. At the end of the street is a rough little quay ending in a modern antique tower of the Rhenish type, which has managed to look old before its time, and is as picturesque as though a couple of centuries, instead of a few years, had mellowed its stones. At low-water the river flows swiftly out to sea over a beach of boulders, the channel marked by tall posts; at high-tide the harbour becomes a quiet pool—a mirror for the lovely surroundings.

Close to the quay stands a row of ancient cottages, the oldest part of the village, stretching up a little byway. Set in the middle, so covered in greenery that little of the wall is visible, is the Rising Sun, which, looking eastward across the bay to where the huge peaked mass of the Foreland lifts itself 800 feet above the eddying tide, catches the sun long before his first rays strike the house-tops further up the street. With taste which cannot be

commended, someone is erecting an hotel or shop—I know not nor care not which—close by, a great staring building which will throw not only the old inn, but the less ancient ‘Rhenish’ tower, completely into the shade.

Above the wooded hill, set in a little valley, behind which the hill rises again another 300 or 400 feet, is the town of Lynton. Between it and Lynmouth the hill is so steep that few houses have been built. One or two, however, cling to the declivity embowered in the trees with which the whole slope is covered, the most picturesque being the Lynton Cottage, a long low bungalow sort of house once a gentleman’s residence, now a private hotel. Just over it towers the Castle, another hostelry which, however excellent in itself, is *not* an ornament to the surroundings.

Neither in Lynmouth nor Lynton is there much to be seen in the way of buildings. The beauties here are the handiwork of Nature, not of man. And magnificent handiwork it is. Whether you stand upon the bridge by the Lyndale Hotel and gaze up the foaming river hemmed in by crag-topped and wooded hills meeting in graceful lines—as on the Teign about Fingle—or explore the recesses of Glen Lyn where the smaller stream descends 400 feet in half a mile; whether you follow the North Walk cut in the face of the cliff below the gray bastions of the Valley of Rocks; whether, lying among the bracken, you look down upon lovely Lee Bay, or, stretched upon the short turf of the Foreland, take in almost at one glance the tiny ‘haven under the hill’ and the mountains of Wales across the blue expanse of channel, you will have to confess that man has had little to do with the panorama, except here and there to mar it. Still, on the whole, the ‘English Switzerland’ has suffered less than might be expected, and even with the best intentions it would be no easy matter to destroy the charm of this most lovely spot.

Lynmouth and Lynton both have churches, the former a new and pretty building in the Early English style ; the latter, though dating from the fifteenth century, looking scarcely older owing to a restoration—indeed, it is hardly out of the mason's hands even now. The tower and south aisle (which has an oak roof) are the only portions that have not been rebuilt. A noticeable feature is the extreme breadth of the windows in proportion to their height.

The road connecting the two places is, of course, of a gradient that no one who has nerves cares to descend upon wheels. One pities the poor coach-horses who have to drag vehicles—in themselves none too light, and often made heavier by the inconsiderate—up this terrible steep. As I watched the fifth horse being added to the team for the scramble skywards, I could not help thinking that the animals wanted a 'lift' quite as much as most of the human beings who now ascend and descend by Mr. Newnes' wonderful railway. By the way, I hear that this piece of engineering has sorely tried the tempers of the local Jehu. For whereas he formerly reaped a rich harvest from the aged, the infirm, the obese, and the lazy, he has now to be content—or rather discontent—with the 'fares' of the few, who, looking upon the lift with suspicion, prefer to pay about six times the amount for what they think a safer mode of travelling.

The road is cut in the hillside above Glen Lyn, full of the voice of the torrent far below, and overhung by the stately Lyn Cliff, where, towards the summit, timber gives place to limestone crag and screes. Save here and there, you cannot see more of the stream than the white flash of a waterfall, so dense is the foliage. The gorge is private property, but open to the public for a consideration, the entrance being close to the Lyndale Hotel. No words can do this paradise justice, and few are the artists who can reproduce the exquisite tints of the gray mossy

boulders round which the river forces its way to join his big brother in the valley beneath. It is one long cataract hemmed in by wooded hills that almost shut out the sky, and bordered by ferns that may be counted by the million.

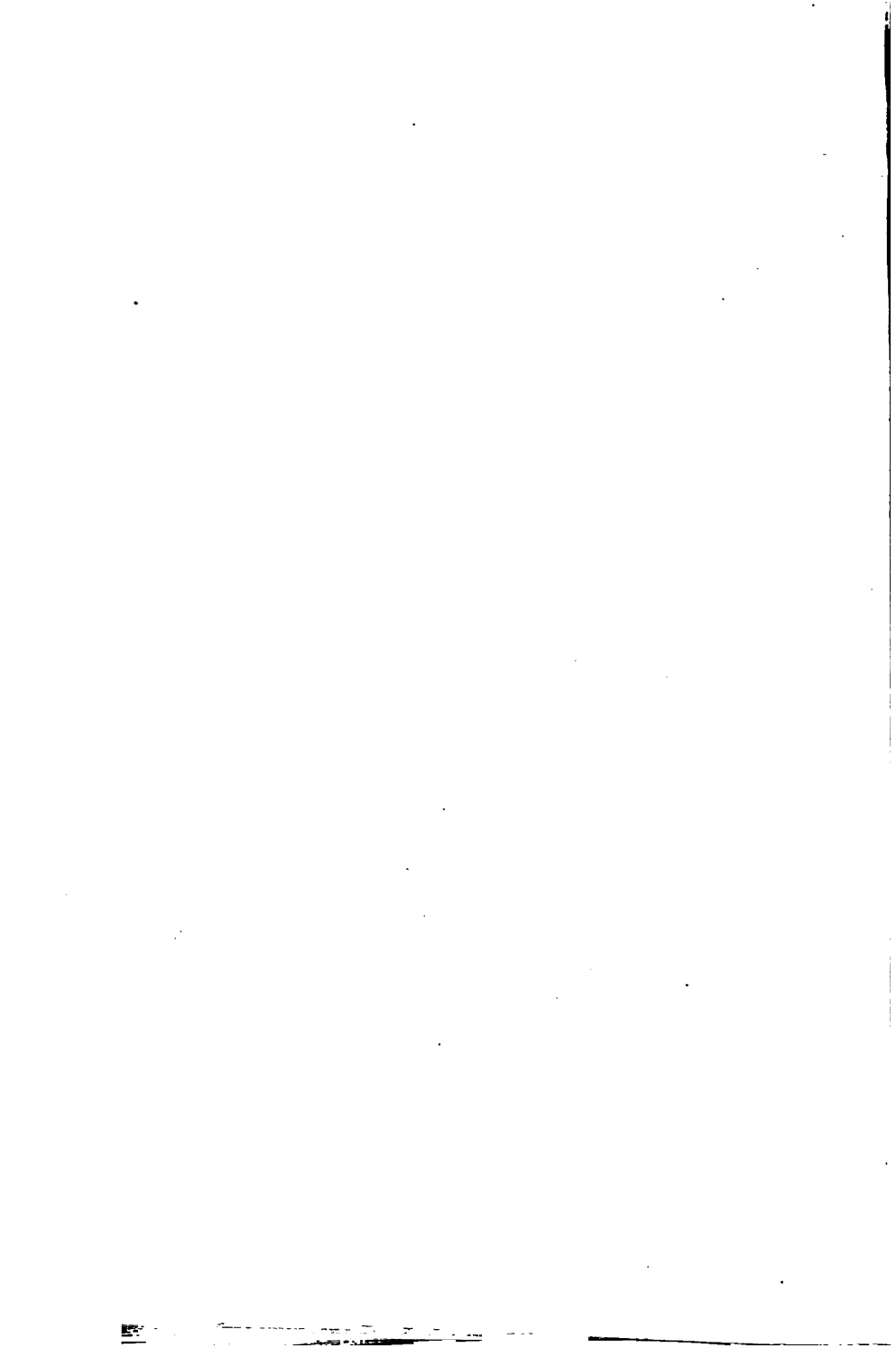
To those accustomed to it, I can well believe that the sound of these falling waters would prove a lullaby. But, by many a visitor I fancy, that the music of the Lyns at night is scarcely more acceptable than that of 'the harmless necessary cat'; perhaps even less so, because continuous. It is not everyone who, like Canon Havergal, will lie awake delighting 'in the continuous tones of the Lyn,' or who will (even if he can) compose the 'canon-like chant' which appears in the visitors'-book at the Lyndale. I know of one individual, at least, who, disturbed by the noisy waters, composed something very uncanon-like indeed.

The Lyn is not a long river—a dozen miles, say, from source to sea. It is very accessible, and by means of road or footpath can be traced every yard of its course. And these ways are well used, for the Lyn is certainly for its size not only the most beautiful river in Devon, but the most popular. There are anglers at every turn, picnic-parties everywhere, and walking tourists galore. And yet it is not spoilt. Narrow as is the ravine, the wealth of foliage, the great boulders, the crags, the thousand and one nooks and corners, conceal the intrusive biped, and there is something in the very grandeur of the scenery that draws away the attention, and makes one's self and ones fellows of small account.

Starting from the oft-mentioned Lyndale Hotel, either road or river-side path may be followed to Watersmeet, where the Combe Park water falls into the Lyn, coming down a glen on the right, a stairway of little cascades. The path at first takes you to Middleham, a group of cottages which, though many are new, accord well enough



On the East Lyn



with the scenery, save when the family washing floats in the breeze, which it not unfrequently does. All along the precipitous slope of Lyn Cleave, or, as it is sometimes called, Summerhouse Hill, winds the carriage-road, the side towards the river protected by a low stone wall. Although the height above the river seldom exceeds seventy or eighty feet, there is something quite Alpine, both in its construction and the character of the great rough hillside—a very mountain in miniature towering above, its beetling crags standing out sharp and clear against the blue sky, whilst on the opposite side the almost equally steep slopes of the tors are nearly covered with foliage.

At Woodside, a favourite lodging-house, we cross and follow the path, now uphill, now down towards the bend below Watersmeet. There are lovely views in both directions, though on Lynton Hill the Castle Hotel is rather too much *en evidence*. I am tempted to quote from the guide of a sometime correspondent, which, however *thorough*, is not usually lavish in scenic description, and is perhaps, therefore, all the more reliable. 'The character of the glen,' he says, 'all the way to Watersmeet is that of a lovely, narrow, thickly-timbered valley, with rock and moss and fern doing their utmost to beautify and frame the ideal of trout streams. Not a dozen yards without its waterfall or deep pool or glittering stickle! There is nothing out of harmony, and not an inch of ugliness or commonplace. The colours of the stream-bed are singularly rich, and, except after heavy rain, when the peat-brew off the moors for a little while makes the river thick, everything, save the depths of the deepest pools, is visible through the limpid water.'

Presently we cross the bottom of a steep grassy combe, one side strewn with large patches of scree, up which climbs a path to Countisbury, a rather dreary moorland hamlet, to which the road from Lynmouth comes in an

ascent a mile and a half long. This, again, is a road trying to the nerves, for no one relishes the possibility of accompanying his coach or carriage in an involuntary descent of five or six hundred feet or so on to the beach below. But this in parenthesis.

At the top of Chiseldon Combe, for so is the grassy combe called, and a terrible climb it is to reach it, is part of the earthworks of an ancient camp. The site was well chosen, for it commands on one side the river gorge, on the other the channel, 750 feet below. What is left of the rampart, and probably from the abrupt nature of the ridge there never was much more, is a bank nearly forty feet high on the very brow of the combe, of which, as well as of the river beneath, it commands a fine view.

If you ever get up to this hilltop, you should go on past Countisbury Church, a plain little structure, which looks as if it had been bleached—as, indeed, it has, for there is not an atom of shade—to the Foreland. This, one of the finest headlands on the coast of Devon, has a grassy summit, but the sides are as much screes as grass, and lower down become precipices, where the strata are curiously contorted. From it we get our last view of Lynton and Lynmouth, and of the beautiful sweep of the bay, bounded by the tremendous slopes below the Tors, down which we can detect a heavily-laden coach gliding on well-skidded wheels, and—yes, there are actually two passengers, *men*, too, walking. To the right stretch the declivities that only end this side of Porlock Bay, and which, beyond Glenthorne, are richly wooded for miles. Between us and Glenthorne, which is on the very boundary-line between Devon and Somerset, the steep is partly wooded, partly rocky and bare, split up as usual by combes, each with its little water-course, one of which after rain falls to the shore in a cascade.

The way by the cliff pathway to Glenthorne is, except in fog—when by all means keep clear of it—a most enjoyable, if a rather rough, ramble. Of Glenthorne itself, a pretty house in the Tudor style, it need only be said that it stands on a tiny plateau 100 feet above the sea, and 900 odd below the hilltop above. Some idea of its extraordinary situation will be gathered when I tell you that, although you may almost throw a stone on to the roof, the carriage-road has to zigzag three miles to reach it!

The highest point of the down is crowned by Old Barrow, an unusually perfect camp of three concentric rings,* from which there is a vast view, from the narrowing Severn estuary above Clevedon to the Worm's Head, on the coast of Gower, a distance of seventy miles. Behind, right away to the horizon, far beyond the valley of the Lyn, stretches the great waste of Exmoor, here purple beneath a cloud-shadow, there yellow or bright green as the sun touches a slope of sere grass or a wet patch of bogland.

Rounding the bend of the river beyond Chiselton, we reach a single-arch stone bridge, and, crossing to the opposite bank, have a fine view of the ivy-hung cliffs towering across the stream just below Watersmeet. Watersmeet itself comes into view as we turn the next corner, and catch sight of the house on the bank we have just left, and to which we again cross by a 'clam.'

Watersmeet is a spot to which no photograph—and there are many—that I have seen does anything like justice. The rocky bluffs rising from a sea of foliage high above the clam—the clam itself backed by the wooded hill between the two streams towering right up to the skyline, and with a silvery cascade tumbling headlong beneath it—the boulders and the fern: all these are

* Fully described in 'An Exploration of Exmoor,' etc.

beyond my feeble powers. Passing the house, we stick to this the right bank of the river, and after much ascending and descending, now through woods, now across slopes of gorse and bracken, plentifully besprinkled with screes, reach a gate, where the path follows a curve in the hillside, and there is a magnificent view down-stream of torrent and woodland. Erelong the tone of the river becomes deeper, and we descend to Long Pool, the only spot worth mentioning on the whole of its course where the impetuous Lyn forgets for awhile its violence. Here, after tearing down a rocky gully that you can almost leap, it bounds over a ledge into the pool, and slides peacefully along between lofty walls of rock. It is one of the most impressive, if not one of the most beautiful, bits on the whole river.

Half a mile above Long Pool Rockford Inn comes into view at a point where the river is spanned by another clam. The inn lies under the woods across the stream by the side of the road leading from Lynmouth up the valley to Brendon and Oare, and at the foot of the hill on which, hidden from our view by the foliage, is Brendon Church, with a tower of warm-looking stone standing out well against the trees. This Rockford Inn is a pleasant place, but, though the scenery is lovely, the situation is rather confined, and the everlasting roar of the river not at all times agreeable. A mile further up the stream is the Staghunters' Inn, or, as it is sometimes called, Millslade Abbey—it occupies the site of an old religious house. Here for awhile the woods on this side come to an end, and the ground behind rises gradually into a low rocky hill, while across the flood, at this spot, more peaceful, the woods are far less lofty, and there is plenty both of air and sunshine. The inn, which has lately been considerably enlarged, is a most comfortable one, and the cottages of the hamlet of Millslade—which is really the village of Brendon—take

away from it that feeling of loneliness which broods over so many of these out-of-the-way places.

The forge at Millslade, which in John Ridd's day was so near the Lyn stream that the blacksmith cooled his horseshoes therein, is a thing of the past, and the Vulcan who presides at the present building across the bridge would have to get down a steep bit of bank to make such a use of the river. A few yards down-stream is an older and more picturesque arch nearly shrouded in ivy. It is so narrow that it could never have accommodated more than packhorses or cattle, but doubtless in the olden time it served its purpose well enough, for of vehicles, whether the slow-moving farm cart or the more rapid waggonette, bearing hilarious holiday-makers, the Lyn Valley has known little till within the present century.

Above Millslade the valley widens and green fields appear, though on the opposite slopes cultivation, oak coppice and furzy brake pretty well divide the honours. This part of the river is known as the Brendon Water; indeed, the Lyn throughout its course is continually taking unto itself a new name. Fancy a torrent a dozen miles in length wanting four titles! Yet such is the case, and in ascending it we have first the Lyn, then the Brendon Water, then the Oare Water, and lastly the Weir Water! Who after this will cavil at Thames and Isis?

A mile and a half from Millslade there is a lovely bit of colouring. On our side, the road, after rising a little, passes downwards through a wood, emerging at a spot where the river sweeps beneath a precipitous declivity nearly 1,000 feet high, strewn with scree, in the middle of which grow clumps of gorse and heather. The effect of the brilliant patches of gold and purple, set amidst the gray-pink stones is extraordinarily rich.

Soon we reach the junction of the Badgworthy Water with the Lyn, and come to Malmsmead Bridge, carrying

the road over the tributary stream, which, by the way, is the boundary between Devon and Somerset. It is a rude structure of two arches, the stones relieved with ivy and fern, and an infant mountain-ash trying to grow out of a buttress. Here are a couple of inns—of course one is the 'Lorna Doone'—in fact, a small hamlet. For as Brendon village is represented by Millslade, so is Oare by Malmsmead; at Oare itself there is, as Blackmore truly says, no village at all.

Malmsmead is at the mouth of that long and romantic valley which takes its name from the stream pouring down it—the Badgworthy Water. There are people who will tell you that this is the *Doone* Valley, but it is nothing of the kind, although well within the district haunted by those once terrible freebooters. The actual lair of the outlaws was in a combe a long two miles (and more, taking in the windings) up the stream, and is well worth visiting, not so much for its own charms, as for those of the grand valley out of which it branches, to my mind the grandest on Exmoor. For when you get half a mile or so up from Malmsmead you are really *on* Exmoor, and the cart-track and path that pass upward to the hills from the road to Slocombeslade communicates with no human habitation save a hill farm or shepherd's cot hid in dim recesses far away.

Some way up on the eastern bank is a farm and refreshment house combined, the latter bearing in enormous characters across the whitewashed wall the name 'Lorna's Bower.' But let not the wayfarer fancy that he has reached the nook where the Doone beauty was wont to retire from her rough companions to the more congenial presence of her gigantic lover: *that* is further up still, and you will be clever if you can discover it at all. The name is said to have been given in derision by the owner of the property, who does not, it is said, love the invasion of his domain by the tourist drawn

hither by the thrilling pages of Blackmore's greatest romance. 'Call it "Lorna's Bower!"' he exclaimed sarcastically to the tenant who had requested him to give the little tea-house a name. And so 'Lorna's Bower' it became.

It is a mile or so onward that you come to Badgworthy Wood, where down through the oaks comes the little stream, gliding over sloping ledges of rocks, that is nowadays known as the 'Water-slide.' That John Ridd climbed up by this to his Lorna you may or may not believe, but that he found the task as formidable as it is described in the novel no one *can* believe who has tried the passage. Indeed, John need not have gone this way at all; the wood is quite passable, even for a child.

Over this lovely little cataract, for such it really is, close to where it tumbles into the Badgworthy Water, the shakiest of shaky clams carries the path along a dark hillside to where a side valley suddenly opens, commanded at the mouth by a green hillock, on which a few stones mark the remains of some building, possibly a look-out. Below it and extending a short distance up the valley to a shepherd's cot is a confused collection of broken walls and foundations, of which little or nothing can be made. The valley is the 'Doone Valley,' and the ruins are those of the dwellings of the Doones—at least, so says the photographer, so say the writers of one or two guide-books. But there is no 'precipice' or 'mountain,' or any of the other terrific adjuncts that excited us so when a score or so years ago we first read 'Lorna Doone.' The valley is an ordinary grassy combe, and a shallow one at that, far less interesting than the greater valley below, which, with its mountainous slopes, dark fir plantations, and ancient oak forest, seems a far more fitting haunt for outlaws than the chine which a few years since was nameless, and only known as 'the combe between Hoccombe and Withycombe Ridge.'

Above the 'Doone Valley' this Badgworthy Valley, though wilder, is less picturesque, like every other moorland glen growing shallower towards its head, where, not far from the tumulus called Larkbarrow, in a dull, bleak part of Exmoor, the stream has its birth.

* * * * *

It is but three quarters of a mile from Malmsmead to Oare, a place to which every reader of 'Lorna Doone' should go on pilgrimage. For here at Plovers' Barrows Farm—which I am afraid the pilgrim will not find, at least, under that name—dwell the Ridds, and in Oare Church Lorna was married. Ridds and Snows still live at Oare, and when I first visited the church fifteen years ago the first thing I noticed in the porch was, 'List of overseers for the parish of Oare, *John Ridd, Nicholas Snow*,' the very names of the hero and of a prominent character in the Exmoor romance. Whether 'the gurt Jan Ridd' ever did exist I cannot tell you; I remember we spent some time in an unsuccessful search for his grave—you must ask Mr. Blackmore. Nor am I any better informed about his bride, and failed lamentably to discover her bloodstains on the altar, though I *did* see the window through which Carver Doone is said to have fired the shot that so nearly cost her her life.

This church is a humble little building enough, almost hidden in a grove of ash and sycamore, with a low tower and plain square-headed window. On the walls of the tower are two hideous paintings representing Moses and Aaron, and on those of the nave sundry tablets to the Snow family, and one adorned with the crest of the Prince of Wales, placed to commemorate his visit to Oare in 1863. There is a similar one, by the way, in Countisbury Church.

Except the church, Mr. Nicholas Snow's house adjoining, and another house across the Lyn, there is nothing at Oare. It is the quietest because the tiniest of hamlets

—if, indeed, it can be called even that. Those who wish to see a something that has—so runs the story—felt the muscles of John Ridd, will find it in the fine ash-tree just inside the wall of Mr. Snow's grounds. One of the branches owes its downward tendency to the hands of this giant yeoman!

The river, here called the Oare Water, comes down from Oareford between hills that are again mostly wooded, though the fell-side that rises to the Porlock Road has almost as much heather as oak coppice. At Oareford, where there is a farm and one or two cottages, we are rapidly approaching the head waters, and are well beyond the haunts of the picnicker, which is a matter for gratitude. For in the great open valley of the Chalk Water, a stream which joins the Lyn at Oareford, the greasy sandwich paper would be more conspicuous than down among the wooded glens towards Lynmouth, and there is something in the splendid sweep of the downs sloping down hundreds of feet to the clear burn, which is better enjoyed in solitude than amid the babble of tongues and the popping of corks. I think that someone has said, and said truly, that this valley of the Chalk Water is more like a Highland glen than anything on Exmoor.

Above Oareford the unfortunate Lyn once more changes its name, and becomes the Weir Water. A short distance up the narrowing stream, which here descends through a rocky gully, overhung with fern and mountain-ash, is Robbers' Bridge, a rough arch, where, according to local tradition, 'the Doone robbers used to stop to divide what they had stolen,' and over which passed, I suppose, the 'war path,' now, alas! for the lovers of romance, swallowed up by a stony road.

Here we leave the road, and get along as best we may through the bracken and heather, that in a very few minutes will be our lot for the next hour, for round the next corner the wild moor is upon us, the last human

dwelling being a keeper's cottage, at the mouth of a sidecombe, clothed with scrub oak. This valley of the Weir Water is neither as deep as that of the Chalk Water, or as rugged as that of Badgworthy. Yet the slopes do not run in one long monotonous hill; they are rather promontories, separated from each other by short gullies or combes. There is not much vegetation of a larger sort. Here and there a thorn-tree or mountain-ash, with its bright crimson clusters, bends in the breeze; but everywhere is bracken, whortleberry, and heather, in August clothing the hillside in a royal mantle of purple. The river, clear as crystal, sparkles down the bottom, maintaining its rocky character to the last. Its source—in a little green amphitheatre on the side of Lucott Hill—is in a district wild and desolate—not as wild and desolate, perhaps, as that of the Dartmoor streams, for the road to Exford is but a gunshot distant. Still, no house is within sight, no human sound strikes upon the ear. Nor is there any view save of eternal waves of moorland.

And so we take our leave of this the last, and perhaps the shortest, of Devon's lovely rivers, not four miles from the spot where we started on our rambles down the first and longest. For across those green and brown and purple undulations westward are the head-waters of the Exe, most lengthy of those streams 'which disburden themselves into the British Ocean,' travelling in a direction exactly opposite to that of the rivers which 'by long wandering seek the Severn Sea.' Our journeys are ended, our labour done. But *is* it a labour? Where is the 'holiday task' more enjoyable than that now brought to a conclusion? What toil more nearly approaching pleasure than this?

Soulless indeed must be the man who can pass through such scenery as we have done without feeling his pulses quicken by so much as one throb, who can gaze into the

rocky glens of Dart or the shadowy gorges of Lyn and still be inaccessible to their beauties, who from some moorland height can look unmoved upon a panorama such as this !

‘ Rivers that gleam ; the red decay
Of woods upon their russet floors ;
Highlands and hills that far away
Rise blue and quiet from the moors ;
Slopes red with fallows, green with leas ;
Lands roll’d and slanted ; field and flood ;
White halls and, over villages,
Towers, here and there, of God.’*

* From Poems by the late R. W. Baddeley (‘ The Dales of Devon ’).

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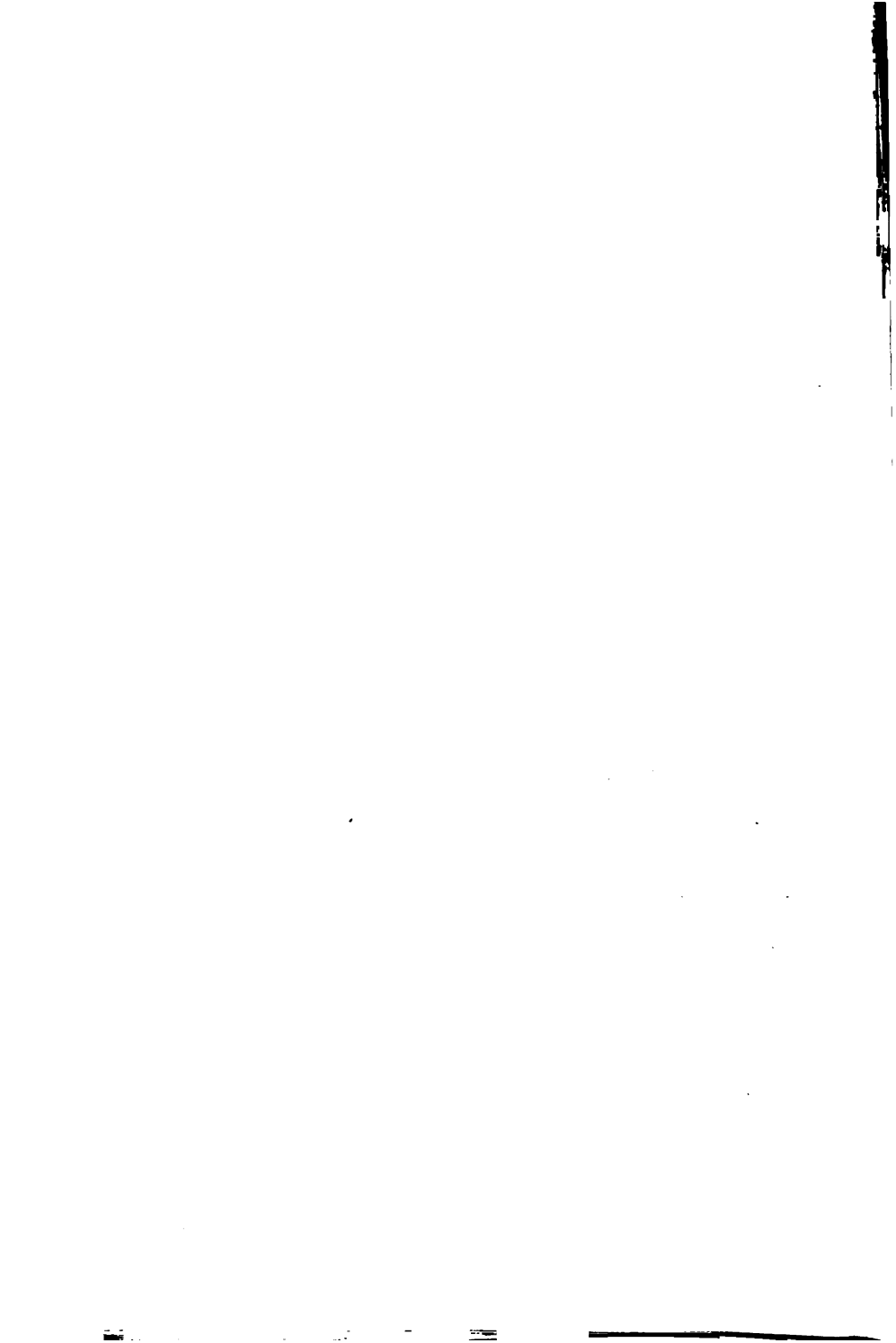
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